CHRIST IN THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

AND IN

THE LIFE OF MAN

BY THE
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I RESPECTFULLY ask only that the purpose kept in view in preparing and arranging the contents of this volume may be understood. I have not undertaken here to exhaust subjects, to construct discourses on the principles of art, to teach clergymen, to offer a contribution to theological science, or to enter on unfamiliar paths of thought. At every step I have sought to place before my mind a mixed company of people gathered for the worship of the Church, representing all degrees of mental strength and cultivation, all shades of faith and doubt, all varieties of religious education and condition; for so, in most places in this country, our congregations are made up. In each sermon an attempt has been made so to open a single aspect of Christ's truth, or of the Christian life, as to help the reader or hearer to seize and hold that truth as a reality, and to live that life with courage and joy. This is all that has been attempted. The attempt was not made of my own motion. Probably the best that can be said in justification of adding another to the large supply of printed sermons is that something in the individuality of each writer or preacher may be turned to account by the Spirit in reaching here or there an indifferent disciple, a weak will, an unbelieving mind, or an unsatisfied heart.

F. D. H.

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THE TRINITY A PRACTICAL TRUTH.

Trinity Sunday.

"THE grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."—*II Cor.* xiii. 14.

THE common distinction between what is doctrinal and what is practical in the Christian religion exists rather in popular impressions than in the reality of things. Doctrine simply means what is taught: practice what is done; and therefore any Christian truth may be said to appear first as doctrine, only that it may appear afterwards as practice. The entire body of Christianity, as we take it from Holy Scripture, is doctrine; but it is the most intensely practical doctrine conceivable, just because it most profoundly and comprehensively concerns the vital welfare of men. Christian purity, as it shines upon the world in the Sermon on the Mount, is a doctrine; as it chastens the conversation of society, or cleanses character, it is a practice. Christian charity, as delivered to us in St. Paul's thirteenth chapter to the Corinthians, is a doctrine; as it enlarges souls, reconciles diversities of temper and culture, and sweetens human homes, it is a practice. In general, Christian practice is simply Christian doctrine gone into the life, institutions, and manners of mankind.

If we adhere, however, to the distinction referred to, making the term "doctrine" stand for ideal truth, then

the article of the Trinity of God will be the meeting-point of the doctrinal with the practical elements of our faith. For, on the one hand, it represents facts lying far above us, in the inscrutable Being of God; but it also lays the foundation for the personal faith which brings peace to the heart and for the duties which give use and honor to life. In itself, it transcends the grasp of our understanding, for the plain reason that the finite can not see around, comprehend, *i. e.*, take in by knowledge, the Infinite.

In this respect, the Trinity has just the mysteriousness which belongs to other facts in God which are generally admitted; or indeed to many facts of God's making in this visible world, like the connection of your mind with your hand, or the growth of a tree from a seed. You may exhaust your thought upon these things; much about them you may well understand; but much more, which you cheerfully accept because it is familiar, is just as completely incomprehensible or inexplicable to reason as that God exists in the threefold Personality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We receive them all alike because an authority which we can not question has avowed them and vouched for them.

Hence it is that, in the annual round of her great commemorations, the Church sets Trinity Sunday between the one half-year which celebrates the facts of the Redeemer's mediation, and the other half—which proclaims the duties of His disciples. This festival gathers up into itself the whole sum of the Christian *doctrine*, as the foregoing facts of the Incarnation have unfolded them, and lays, *in them*, the foundation for its whole practical system of righteousness. It binds the two hemispheres of Christian thought and Christian life

together in an undivided whole—one glorious globe of light.

My proposition is broad. You may traverse every field of human duty, in private piety, in the family, in business, in the state,—you may trace out every branch of personal holiness in all the lovely and noble forms of Christian well-doing, and you will find no form of goodness that has not its origin in this Triunity of God,—in the parental providence of the Father, the renewing grace of the Son, the sanctifying communion of the Spirit.

For the proof, we may look to three different regions of revelation in order: 1st, The Inspired Scriptures; 2d, The moral nature and history of man; 3d, The Gospel-kingdom or Church of Christ.

I. The array of Scriptural proofs is too vast to be presented in detail. We can now only indicate its scope and principal points. First, there is no one of those qualities or powers which are commonly recognized as essential to the being of God, as distinguished from the being of any created nature, which is not, in one or another part of the Bible, ascribed, severally, to the First, to the Second, and to the Third, of these Persons. Each and all of the three are separately and emphatically declared to be eternal, almighty, perfect in holiness, of a self-determining will, knowing all things, turning the hearts of men, and worthy to be worshipped. Yet with equal emphasis they are not only, as in the text, named and associated together, with no suggestion of degrees of rank, "without any difference or inequality," but they are explicitly declared to be one, —in their substance, in their power, in their glory.

Secondly, these three are so set before us that the entire Christian system could not be complete or even consistent without them all. Each refers to the others

as co-equal Persons,—the Father to the Son and the Spirit, the Son to the Spirit and the Father, the Spirit to the Father and the Son. Leave out any one from your system, and you cleave the glorious body of Revelation asunder; you mutilate the Divine symmetry; you bereave agonized humanity of a third part of its heavenly benediction.

Again, taking up the Scriptures in their historic order, from the beginning, Christ and the Holy Ghost appear with the Father as living, acting, inspiring Persons, from first to last. Amidst the miracles of creation the Holy Ghost broods upon the face of the waters. As the wondrous story of man goes on, we see, through the earlier economy, as St. Peter says, holy men and prophets all speaking "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Afterward, it is by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Messiah Himself is miraculously conceived, to be born of the Virgin, and that His mission is attested at His baptism in the Jordan. The Spirit's more manifest coming forth is at length made ready as the Saviour departs, till, after the scene of the Pentecost at Jerusalem, all the preaching of the apostles, and all the upbuilding of the Church, and all the conversion of the world, are effected by the witnessing of the same Spirit; for "no man," it is written, "can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."

With corresponding measures moves the revelation of the Son of Man. In the beginning He was with God, and was God. Not without Him too, says the apostle, the worlds were made.

Even in Eden, as soon as the woman has disobeyed, by the lifting of the veil we foresee Him made flesh, "born of a woman," bruising the serpent's head, and atoning for the fall; walking with Enoch; known to

the patriarch Job as the Redeemer that shall stand upon the earth; blessing all mankind in Abraham's seed; the Shiloh that should come of the family of Judah; wrestled with, in prayer, by Jacob and the father of the faithful; worshipped as the Jehovah-angel in the fiery bush; leading Israel in the burning column; foretold as the everlasting High Priest in the Psalms of David; the Emmanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor and Mighty God, of Isaiah's prediction; "the Lord our Righteousness" named by Jeremiah; the glorious appearance of a Man on the sapphire throne, before whom Ezekiel fell in adoration; Daniel's "Messiah who should be cut off, but not for Himself;" Haggai's "Desire of all Nations;" Malachi's "Sun of Righteousness rising on the nations." He is the eternal Child of Mary, He is the theme of the whole Bible, the Bond of living unity between Old Testament and New, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the Prophet, Priest, and King of that kingdom, earthly and heavenly, which hath no end.

II. Pass now from the Scriptures to the moral constitution and history of man. Outside the Bible, there are three different regions for the manifestation of God to man. There is nothing beyond them, and if we leave out any one of them, or any part of any one, we have not the whole. These three are, 1st, nature, or the kingdom of the outward universe; 2d, the Incarnation, or the kingdom of "supernatural grace;" and 3d, the human soul, or the kingdom of man's interior life.

To the first of these, which we call nature, belong the forms and substances of material things, the earth and the heavens and all the host of them, the numberless tribes of animated creatures, with all their qualities, habits, and laws, together with the physical structure

and natural mind and affections, *i. e.*, all that is not spiritual, of man himself. This is what we recognize as nature. In it the One God has a peculiar work, creating. But as we commonly apply the term "creating" to the beginning or originating of things, that process by which He preserves and so ever re-creates these innumerable forms and activities of nature is named Providence. Creation is the act that calls things into being. Providence is only the same power supporting them in order.

We have around us, to-day, impressive tokens of this life-giving force in nature. The new season is exuberant and fragrant with it. The swift pulses that are throbbing in every shrub, the moist breath of the spring across the clover, the sunshine that unveils the faces of the wild-flowers, the elms that stand like graceful urns brimmed with streaming life from root to leaf, the frail weed that springs under their shade, and the live moss that clings to their bark,—all this prodigality of beauty with which nature encompasses us everywhere, from the rose-leaf to the planets, is but a fresh creation; the putting forth, in forms of matter, of an inexhaustible vitality behind and within it, capable of infinite expression. God, then, is a Creator, and Creatorship is the first work of personality in His threefold Being. On it stands the first article in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;" and to Him who is thus manifest, cries the first supplication in our Litany, "O God, the Father of heaven."

The second revelation of God is His revelation in Christ. Nature was not enough for man's spiritual education and salvation; and for the simple reason that, by virtue of his spiritual freedom, or his power of choice

between good and evil, man stands above nature. Holding this place of superiority, endowed with it by that original trust conveyed to him when all created things were given into his dominion, man comes to a twofold need of a supernatural mediation. He wants it for the positive unfolding and ripening of his natural religious powers. He wants it for rescue when the choice has been wrong, and the forces of sin have brought him down under their terrible destruction. As a conscious soul, man has thoughts that the whole natural world can not interpret, desires that the natural world can not fill, aspirations that the natural world and even natural religion can not meet. And yet these are engendered in him as a part of his natural constitution. It is only in cases of very rare and exceptional stupidity, or a degree of social degradation brought about through generations of peculiar barbarism, that any specimen of our kind is left without them. The external creation is unequal to them; and any school that you can organize wholly out of *its* resources and specimens will be helpless to train them or to satisfy them. The august and immense canopy of the sky is too confined for them. The "star that walks alone along the utmost verge of heaven," is but a waymark on their journey. The sea saith, "It is not in me" to limit them. The "light of setting suns" never laid these painful and importunate questionings of the human spirit to rest in any single mind. Nay, I suppose it is the common testimony that it is by precisely the grandest and noblest and most glorious openings of the visible universe that these insatiable longings for the unseen are stirred in us with special power. It is just when the world does its bravest for us that our supersensual life is most oppressed with the feeling of its insufficiency, and the homesick heart feels

out into infinitude for the light that never was on sea or land. Man is lost till the Son of Man comes forth from the Father. The palace of nature is empty till the King enters. If it is moral excellence that the mind of the world is seeking for, the Second Person of the Trinity not only carries up all ideas of character to their loftiest pitch, by saying, "Be ye therefore perfect," but He matches the precept by an actual embodiment and stands among men the visible, glorious exemplar of a Goodness that is absolutely and spotlessly Divine. Or is it some vision of disinterestedness, or self-sacrifice, that the higher thought of humanity is feeling for? Then in the same Person, we not only hear it spoken in words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," but God comes in the sacrificial mystery, makes a complete propitiation, sets up the cross, planting its foot in the very core of the world's heart, and binding about it the reverent affections of all ages.

The precise disorder Christ came to remedy was that man and God had fallen apart. How could this estrangement be mediated by a Saviour who had in Him the nature of only one, and that one the inferior, of the parties alienated? Against God, God only had we sinned, and done this evil in His sight. None less than He, then, no daysman of baser rank, can make the necessary atonement, at once magnifying the law, as being divinely just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. It must be both God and man, the God-man, who redeems; God, against whom the sin of the broken law was directed, man, who had broken it, and was waiting for the penalty. As in the race, or collective humanity, when Christ came in the flesh, so it is with every individual soul when Christ comes there and stands at the door and knocks.

This soul sees its helplessness, and acknowledges its sin. The disease has crept into all its circulations and tainted all its blood. It confesses there is no good thing in it. "My transgression is ever before me." "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Can nature, can the outward creation, "deliver"? It is fair, it is beautiful, it is orderly, for it is the workmanship of God. Can it atone for this lost soul that has gone down under the powers of sin, the world, and the devil, and is now in the terror and the punishment of a separation from its God? But nature stood there, with all the features of its loveliness as fair,—with all the grace of its forms as beautiful,—with all the movements of its laws and forces as orderly as now, while the Race was steadily sinking, and the heart was steadily hardening. No. These things are the monuments and the handwriting and the voices of law,—fixed, inevitable, inexorable law. Their very order mocks the penitent. They say, "Obey and live. Hast thou, O foolish child, disobeyed? Then be wrecked against our iron necessity; perish amidst our pitiless magnificence; our storms and our sunshine are alike unsympathizing!" Man sees no cross in nature till the Saviour, its Lord and ours, rears it at Calvary. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," declares the God of nature, Almighty. "God so loved the world that whosoever believeth in Me should not perish, but have everlasting life," says the crucified and dying Son.

The consolation and the victory of faith!

"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," who is the Sacrifice, and who giveth the victory. And so advances the Creed: "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,—God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,—who for us men and for

our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate:" and so to Him prays the second supplication of the Litany: "O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us."

But the Triune Fulness of God is not yet complete. In creation, we have seen, He comes forth in the law of a visible order, working by law, manifest in law, the friend of law-keeping or obedient men. Then, when no such men are found, when disobedience is universal, and sin tyrannizes over the fallen race, and the law is working no longer life but death, He comes in the supernatural grace of redemption, working by that Sacrifice to which all the sacrifices of the Law had pointed, and from which they had borrowed back all their saving efficiency, through all the elder, prophetic period. He is manifest now in the Incarnation, the God of men who repent and have faith in the cross of Christ.

By the very conditions of the visible Incarnation, however, it must be limited and temporary. For here the Eternal comes into history, and thus is made subject to limitations of time and place. Jesus, the Son of Mary, wears a human body, which must pass from the world.

It is expedient for His disciples that He go away. Abiding Himself, always, the Personal Head and unseen Lord of His people, as attested in the ascension of the glorified Form, there is yet a necessary term to His manifestation in the flesh. Hence the third development of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity-mystery. There is a third realm where the one God is also to be revealed. It is the inner world of the believer's heart. Christ saw the deep necessity for that, and made careful preparation for it, before His departure, in the promise

of the Holy Ghost. Clearer and brighter the tokens of that witnessing Spirit shine out in His personal instructions and intercourse with His followers, as the last hours draw on. More and more plainly He speaks to them of the Comforter that shall come. Like Himself, the Eternal Word, that Paraclete has been from the beginning, and was with God, and was God: for even before the birth of the Redeemer it was by the Holy Ghost, as the creeds confess, that He was conceived and incarnate. But now, in the heavenly order, the Spirit shall *appear;* He shall proceed both from the Father and the Son, for Christ expressly says both, "*I* will send Him," "Whom *My Father* will send." The symbol is shown when Christ breathes on the apostles, before His ascension. The august reality is seen when the Day of Pentecost is fully come, and the disciples, before schism or heresy had begun, are in the unity of "one place," and the rushing mighty wind sweeps through the chamber, and the tongues like fire sit upon each of them. Then the Holy Ghost as a felt, conscious power and person, hereafter to be symbolized in the laying on of hands upon the believer's head, is inaugurated in His eternal office, quickening, comforting, sanctifying souls forever.

Henceforth, when the weary and heavy-laden heart comes home repenting to the Father's house, through faith in the Son, it is known to be the Holy Spirit that quickens it. Henceforth, when the secret mercy of a peace that passeth all understanding softens the pain or tranquillizes the sorrow of troubled breasts, it is the same Spirit that is the Comforter. Henceforth, when a hidden inspiration bears on advancing Christians from one degree of sanctity or of holy assurance in faith to another, and changes them from glory to glory, it is by the same "Spirit of the Lord," the Sanctifier of the faith-

ful. And when new tides of consecrated feeling and new impulses of social zeal set in upon sluggish communities, rousing the Church to her aggressive work, breaking up the slumber of formalism or worldliness, making her periods of power through the ages all along to be periods of new and living faith in the Spirit, reviving, without the miracle, the Pentecostal conversions, it is the coming, again and again, of the same blessed Paraclete, moving upon the waters of baptism, appointing and replenishing ministers, strengthening and confirming converts by His seven-fold gifts, and filling the world with the missionary light of the tongues of flame, till all nations hear them speak, each in its own language, the wonderful works of God.

The Creed continues: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets." And so the Litany entreats in its third supplication.

III. We take our stand at that great hour when this doctrine was plainly and decisively announced as the chief doctrine of the Gospel, the practical substance of Christianity, and the comprehensive summary of the grand commission given, by Him who only had a right to give it, to the preachers and planters of His Church. It is just on the eve of His final departure from the world. His accredited apostles, a little group of anxious but inspired men, are gathered about Him, filled with the solemnity and tenderness of this last farewell. They are waiting with eager attention to catch every syllable of the final salutation. Now, as is customary in the parting interview, the ambassadors shall be told what is of supreme importance in the work they are

to do, and the message they are to bear. Now all remaining doubts will be swept away. Now, if the revelation of His truth can be gathered into one condensed declaration of faith, they will surely hear it. No dark parable, no fanciful speculation, no subordinate matter to be rated among the non-essentials of men's belief, can intrude here. He speaks: "Go ye." That stirring word, summons them to their missionary calling and girds them up for their march. But "go" to do what? "Go ye, and preach the Gospel to every creature," or, as another Evangelist reports it, "teach all nations, baptizing them." There is no qualifying of the command, and no limit to its application. But teach them what? Baptize them into whom? This is the last and highest question to be answered. The doctrine ye are to proclaim, the threefold cord with which ye are to "bind," the covenant names into which ye are to baptize,—hear these; the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost.

There is no distinction among their honors, no inequality in their dignity, no scale of rank or of degrees of Divinity. Two, the Father and the Son, are known as PERSONS, and there is no faintest hint that the third is otherwise. Two are unquestionably very God, the Father and the Spirit, and there is no shadow of an intimation that the second is less. The three names send out their light over Christendom with co-equal, co-eternal and blended beams. They are one. By the power hid in that truth, the Triunity of the one only and everlasting God, the world was to be converted and to be saved: by no other. He who is the Author and Finisher of our faith, in His wisdom and His love, whom to believe is life everlasting, hath spoken it. He only adds farther a fresh assertion of His own omnipresence in His Church, a new proof of His Divinity,—"Lo I am

with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And when He had thus spoken, blessing them, He was received up into heaven, to draw all men unto Him—to be Lord of the one indivisible and Catholic communion, of the Church above and the Church below.

See then how, in the very terms of the office assigned to His Church to perform, there is an exact correspondence with this fundamental doctrine of the faith. First, there is action:—"Go ye." This answers, on earth and in men, to the creative work of the Godhead. The natural power must work; natural means must be employed. The scene of things for the spiritual harvest, or, if you prefer that image, for the battles of the Church militant, must be prepared. The evening and the morning of each day of the creative power must see some step taken forward. The whole visible framework of a solid organization, corresponding to nature in the plan of God's works, must be set in order.

Secondly, there is the continued presentation of the fact of redemption, under its due sign and sacrament,—"baptizing them," coupled with the preaching of the Gospel. As the Second Person was the embodying of the Word and redeemed the world, as that Word was made flesh,—so the living Word must still go forth, beginning at Jerusalem, then through Judea and Samaria, and finally to all the earth. The new covenant, superseding that of the elder Testament, is to pledge the blessings of propitiation, gather and bind in one the Catholic family of Christendom, and, by the sanctifying of water to the mystical washing away of sin, bring back clean blood into the disordered heart of the Race. But finally, that this Christian system should take effect, waken a true repentance, create a real regeneration, and yield the Lord a Bride without spot of iniquity, or

wrinkle of withered life, or any such thing, the energy of the Spirit must attend it. The Triune Name must be spoken. The Holy Ghost, saith St. Peter, sent down from heaven, must accompany the preaching. God's flock must be fed by men whom the Holy Ghost hath made overseers. "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

What is remaining but that in the simplicity of a searching and earnest faith we should put the question to ourselves and to one another: Has this wonderful and blessed doctrine entered in, to bear its gracious fruit in our own weak and tempted lives? Do you, personally, laying aside your pride, humbly repenting of your sin, believe in God, as they must believe who are to live and not die? Daily, having confessed Him, are you proceeding in a godly life more and more, growing into a higher sanctification of every power and affection of your soul?

Only he who so believeth, saith your God, is saved.

MAN'S PART IN CONVERSION.

First Sunday after Trinity.

"And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—*Acts* ix. 6.

This is the strong impulse of religious action. In men of earnest, simple natures, like that of the man who speaks here, no sooner is there a new vision of truth than there is a new resolution for duty,—so inseparably are an awakened spirit and a quickened life bound together.

Saul had seen a new sight. By a wonderful illumination poured in on his mind, he beheld that gracious Master he would persecute, standing before him. One look at the majestic and tender countenance he was just now ready to insult changed his anger to repentance. He did not spend much time in gazing at this radiant spectacle. It purposely vanished from him. He did not call his fellow-travellers to admire it as a wonder. It was no midnight phantom, no superstition of the darkness, but a noonday reality. And therefore, though he had an errand to Damascus, and was hotly driving at it, he looked instantly for some new work. The heavens were new; the earth was new; and his life's business must be new. It is very significant. Nothing had been said to him about working; only a voice of pleading remonstrance: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest

thou Me?" Nothing had yet been given him *to do*. Simply, his interior world had been revolutionized and rebuilt for him in a moment.

Such tremendous inward exercises and such overpowering convictions are not meant to end in mere emotion. What this work shall be is the first question. "What wilt Thou have me to do?" So the convicted jailer, when he saw the prison doors shaken open before the apostles,—"Sirs, what shall I *do* to be saved?" So the young man, to Jesus, "What good thing shall I *do* to inherit eternal life?" And so to that preceding preacher, John the Baptist, when they heard his pungent doctrine, class by class, as they came up, the people, the publicans, the soldiers said, "What shall we *do* then?" It is the sincere cry of every direct, earnest nature, with a new and Christian view of life.

There is a supernatural element, and there is a natural one, in St. Paul's conversion, of which we have the account in one of this Sunday's lessons. The supernatural is for our faith. The natural is for our imitation.

After the first glow of interest, when one has been carried up to a higher point of religious determination, roused by some providence or grace, there comes a period of suspended energy; sometimes of reaction; sometimes of miserable complacency;—a looking back to see how far we have come; or sideways, to see who is coming with us. "Suffer me to go first and bury my father:" "What shall this man do?" The strained sinews are relaxed. Here is the test of a true renewing. Can you survive that point of peril? If not, it is not a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. Your will was not converted, only your feelings; and, as they are the transient, variable part of us, they are easily converted back again to falsehood and selfishness. Hence, the very question

that belongs just there, where interest has been excited in these great realities of religion, but not strengthened into a principle and a habit, is this,—"What wilt Thou have me to *do?*" How shall the better feeling pass into a better character?

There may be some persons here asking this question, who regard it as unspeakably the most important question that can be raised; in fact, the one only very important question for the present, all other interests retiring to a distance, where they can afford to wait till this is settled.

That is, you would gladly cease living as you have lived, and begin a new life, from higher motives, in a holier spirit, for immortal objects, as a disciple of your Saviour. You know it is now high time to awake out of sleep. How shall you proceed? No more complete or vivid reply can be found than in what took place in the apostolic narrative. Analyze the informal account, and there are five things mentioned: A personal concern; doing the first simple duty; silent meditation; submission to a visible religious authority; the appeal to Christ by prayer.

I. In the history, notice first, it is kept a personal matter between the individual man and Christ the Master. The very form of the question puts the matter into this shape: "Lord, what will Thou have *me* to do?"—not "this man;" not that man; not people in general; not other members of a congregation; not older people, or people of better natural dispositions, or those that have more opportunities; or any body else; but myself—just as I am, and with just what I have;—and God knows all that I am, and how little I have. What wilt Thou have *me* to do? To Saul, in the text, the question was blazoned out into this vividness and searching direct-

ness by the fiery signals that surrounded him. It was no time for any thing but personal feeling and acting. Conscience told him what it meant. He knew instantly he was on an impious errand, and this miraculous meteor was his warning. The voice, too, had just spoken out of the air, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" There was no mistaking that accent, for it added, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." It is no wonder that he cried out "trembling and astonished," as if there were no moment to be lost, and as if there were no other soul in the universe but himself before the Judge, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" Jesus is persecuted by indifference and by impenitence as often as by open hatred; by a thoughtless and selfish mind as well as by sword and fagot;—and here, as well as at Damascus. Every one of us that scorns His love, or disobeys His call, or rejects His redemption, enters into the guilt of His crucifixion. It is a personal offence, and it needs a personal repentance.

To those, then, whose thoughts have begun to turn with solicitude towards a Christian life, and to inquire what they shall do, the first counsel is, Keep it before you as a personal concern. Do nothing to blunt the edge of that secret, rebuking conscience. Do not try to throw your uneasiness off by saying you are no worse than your neighbors. Make no cowardly attempt to shift your responsibility upon others,—whether society, your education, your employers, your tempters, or unfaithful religionists. Draw it rather closer and closer home to your own breast. If the draught penitence puts to your lips is bitter, it is none the less a wholesome medicine,—drink it. The present pain, if you only let it work out its discipline, will prove your future and everlasting peace. Remember how many souls have

missed their salvation by halting between a general interest and a particular, personal consecration. Were there none to go beyond this vague and aimless assent to it, the Christian faith, as a cause, would perish. They that honor Christ before men are they that have made it a personal work, have taken the one decisive step, have stood fearlessly forth for His name. What you are to do first of all is to realize it is to yourself He is speaking.

II. Again, this question of a roused mind, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" is answered, in the narrative of St. Paul's conversion, *Do the first simple duty at hand;* and do it for Christ's sake, because He has required it. Human judgments would, very likely, have expected something different,—something quite out of the common way, and, as we should say, comporting better with the dignity of the occasion. After such a supernal manifestation from the skies, surely life will not have to settle down into its tame uniformity again? Curiosity would expect some remarkable mission at once. Pride would suggest a sudden elevation into grand undertakings. Amazement would suspend ordinary business as too profane for these privileged hours. But no; the first step must be plain and practical. The vision over, St. Paul must march on as before,—outwardly as before,—only with a changed errand and another heart. Above all, there must be no pause of indolence. "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The Bible handles our moral nature very wisely, for it understands our weaknesses perfectly. After any spiritual excitement, or start forward, there is apt to come a contempt for familiar tasks. "If this is all it comes to," —complains flattered ambition,—"the same old drudgery, the same conflicts, the same menial services, the

same household routine—conversion is poor. I expected to be sent on signal enterprises; I want to do good on a large scale; circumstances are too narrow; vulgar business, housekeeping, text-books,—small virtues like industry and patience,—these are nothing to the kingdom of heaven!" See how the searching Scriptures rebuke this dangerous vanity; and how profoundly they interpret human nature. After that rapturous night when Jacob saw the splendor of heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending, the next morning he arose, put together a few stones for a religious memorial, and went straight on his journey. When the Syrian commander, leprous and heart-sick, found the Hebrew prophet ready to cure his disorder, he expected some magnificent demonstration of miracle. But no; it was simply, "Go dip thy ailing body seven times in the Hebrew river Jordan,"—a provincial stream. "Too simple, too common," he said. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" Yet that was the way to health. At their first call, the fishermen that were to convert the world were not sent out with banners and trumpets to the cities and nations afar off. Drop your fishing-nets and come after Me, in a quiet, obscure, daily doing of My hard work, and in due time you shall be kings and priests unto God! The healed leper that Christ touched was only to *go home* and tell what great things God had done for him. The blind man restored to sight, instead of despising his old religion, must heed its ceremonies, and go to the priest, and offer the same old gift that Moses commanded. The "young man" was looking for some striking, unprecedented sacrifice; but to go and increase the charity at his own door, among those poor people he had seen so often, was more than he could bear. No, the true self-

sacrifice is not on high places or in strange places. Back to the old scenes, the dull shop, the unsocial, unexciting day's work, the tedious routine of the office; back to the humdrum of the nursery; back to toil, and vexation, and fatigue, and disappointment,—to small dealings with small men, to teaching the stupid, feeding and clothing the ungrateful, and to commonplace people, and, worse yet, to find out how much is commonplace in yourself. Only remember, your Saviour is there in all His glory, and beauty, and power, and peace. And *now you know this;* you feel Him there. You, too, have seen the heavens open, seen the light brighter than the sun; heard the voice, "Come unto Me; I am with thee." And if you take with you the new Spirit, which has beamed upon you in your blessed hour, brightened upon you in your night of vision, then all the dull taskwork will be transfigured in that light. A religious beauty, unseen, unfelt before, will touch them, and rest on them, and soften them. A fresh cheerfulness will cheer them. They will all look friendly and fair. The toil will be sacred, the drudgery divine, the vexing care a holy discipline, the yoke easy, the burden light. The work will be much the same; the change is within. Expel the old temper; cleanse out corrupt passions; conquer selfishness; rouse from indifference; take up thy cross. But then go straight to the nearest, plainest duty, and 'it shall be told thee' there, in the opening path of Providence, what thou shalt do next.

III. Again, there comes in, early, a period of silent seclusion and meditation. Life, the best life, is not all outward action. Observe how remarkably and effectually the apostle was shut up to himself. First, a blindness, so that he had to be led into the city by the hand, "not seeing the sun for a season." Then, three days of abso-

lute privacy, fasting, thinking,—looking over the past, examining his motives, taking his departure anew, readjusting the inward scenery and materials of his character under this strange new light, setting up new standards. Afterwards he speaks of spending three years in Arabia, a desert region. He needed this cooling air of stillness and loneliness. His passions had been fiery, his spirit hot, his anger terribly tempestuous,—"breathing out threatenings and slaughter," the record says,—seizing men and women and dragging them to prison and to death. Not long before he had taken a bloody and ferocious delight in Stephen's martyrdom; and now, sitting at the feet of that Jesus whom he had persecuted, he had that scene to remember,—the saint's last transfigured look as he "fell asleep," the voice of pity and mercy, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,"—coming back to haunt and torture him. Food enough for meditation! That prayer must have lingered in Saul's memory, to prepare the way for his great renewing. There is a saying of St. Augustine,—"*Si Stephanus non orasset, Ecclesia Paulum non haberet.*" If Stephen had not prayed, the Church had lost her Paul. The Valencian painting, which represents Saul as walking by Stephen's side to the execution, with a sad and "melancholy calmness," contradicts all the written history, and his own confession that he was "exceeding mad" against the Christians. He "made havoc of the Church," breaking into houses to snatch his victims, and horribly tempting them to blaspheme. Even after his change, Christians were afraid of his inquisitorial reputation; Ananias, at first, dared not go near him. In the language of Chrysostom, "Christ, like a skilful physician, healed him when his fever was at the worst." There was room enough for three days of still repentance. Like the out-

ward form of the Master, that old life must die, and lie "three days" hid in a sepulchre, before the new-created man could be "risen with Christ."

Here, then, is there not something for us and our own nineteenth-century experience? None of us can be spiritually strong without retirement, without sober meditation. The mount and the closet and the desert have their ministry for us all, not to make us perpetual recluses, but to confirm our convictions and prepare us for wiser work. Let us not run too fast into the mixtures of society. *Our* lives, too, have all been too much heated with passion, and too eager with the senses. There is a lesson, for us of this bustling age and hurrying country, in that strong penitent man, fasting, repenting, shut in his dark room, thinking, praying. When the deepest springs of life are moved by any grand experience we can not speak:—we *ought* to be still. Even Nature, whenever she discloses to us her grander scenery, shuts our lips. After that call from Heaven, with the visible appearance of the Son of God,—*His* voice speaking,—the apostle longed for silence; and it came. Such seclusion is sometimes our salvation. Every real renewal is a winepress that must be trodden alone.

IV. We recognize a visible religious authority. St. Paul needed guidance, and it was given him. He was not left to himself. The same Spirit that had awakened him instructed him. The same Lord that had called him counselled him. Ananias, a disciple of experience, a representative of the Church, was sent to encourage him,—to open his eyes, to introduce him by holy baptism to the body. If his strong nature needed help, our weak ones need it no less. What the Lord's messenger and the miracle and the voice direct from heaven were to him, one full and illuminated Book and the Ministry and the

ordinances are to us. One of those familiar things spoken of just now, which an honest man must not despise doing if he means to build himself up into Christian strength, is to read the Bible and to put himself into contact with the sacraments,—those outward channels in which God makes His invisible and spiritual influences to flow and play with peculiar power. It sounds like very commonplace advice, I know. Visions are more exciting; ecstacies are more transporting; sentimentalists will say it is uninteresting; pseudo-spiritualists will say it is formal; novelty-seekers will say it is old-fashioned. But remember, the supposition now is that you are in earnest about making yourself a Christian man, and are willing to take the practical, sensible means. One of these, and a chief one, is a study of that Record where that whole wisdom is written,—the Revelation out of which the world's light and life, from generation to generation, have been drawn. It is the text-book of the Christian knowledge. It is the daily teacher, and the inexhaustible treasury, and the Divine Monitor, and the gracious Comforter of them that mean to be students and workers for Christ. Whenever it is displaced, Christian character loses richness and depth. One reason why our modern religion is superficial, weak, irreverent, and looks so little like the saintly countenance of the old believers, is that the intimacy with that nourishing inspiration declines. If the Bible your mother gave you, or rather your Heavenly Father gave you, has been crowded out and superseded by any other books,—whether light or solid, fiction or science, —there is not a part of your manly nature that is not suffering impoverishment for it,—intellect, conscience, heart, will,—your soul most of all. In every house let that hallowed volume be opened, and deliberately, rev-

erentially read every day, and nothing will raise our whole level of life, give vigor and force to our purposes, and stimulate our studies, and check our follies, and bless us every way, so much. There is a divine adaptation between the Bible and the human soul. By a fitness quite too wonderful to be explained, God created each for the other. That preadaptation the ten thousand-fold experience of mankind has proved to exist between the Book of Life and the organ of life,—God's Scripture and God's Child. The acknowledged master of German Letters said, "The higher the countries ascend in civilization, the more the Bible will be found and be made necessary, partly as the basis, and partly as the instrument of education." Nor can you separate the Bible from the Church. There were noble traits in Paul's character, wrought there by his Churchly Hebrew training,—a habit of obedience, reverence for authority, loyalty to a kingdom and its rule. And so as soon as he was a Christian he was a Christian Churchman. He began with baptism. From baptism he went to the frequent Feast of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. He laid apostolic hands on believers. Our busy society has so little in its influence that is really spiritual,—it offers so few helps to a weak soul struggling to maintain a Christian conversation,—that we do all need to replenish our inner light and love, to reëstablish our strength from supernatural and sacramental fountains.

V. You will not succeed alone. It is no works of yours, be they near or far, be they small or great, that can bring you pardon or peace. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." It is the Hearer of prayer that must work within our work. It is the precious blood that must cleanse. First and last and ever to be repeated is the look upward, the appeal to the Master. St. Paul

spoke first, not to man, not to himself, not to Ananias, not to any prophet, or friend on earth; it was, "*Lord*, what wilt *Thou* have me to do?" "Enter into thy closet." We must come back, and keep coming back, the moment we have resolved, and at every successive step of the way, to the Crucified, to the Great Source of spiritual life and power. Every petition must rise from the foot of the Cross. Among our discontents and failures have we made faithful trial of that? There is no such thing as growth in a holy life without communion between the heart and Him. The approval of good men is much; reading, silence, resolve, action, are much; but when we would replenish the inmost power of all, we must repair to our Redeemer. Enter into thy closet; shut the door. For every perplexity, every obstacle, every obscurity, every despondency, a fresh supplication: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and He will show us. He has promised that He will. "Ask and ye *shall* receive, seek and ye *shall* find."

What ought we to say more? The personal resolve, doing for your Lord the first practical duty at hand, silent meditation, study of the Word, the appeal upward to the Saviour. If I have omitted any thing, supply it from your own better thought. But, I beseech you, think! You who have lived another week in servitude to Mammon, or to fashion, or to yourself, have you no ear to-day for that voice which comes down from the friendly and pleading lips of your Lord, bidding you rise to a loftier life, and to make sure, while the day lasts, of spiritual and abiding riches? You whose minds, even while your bodies have given their formal attendance in the sanctuary, have even now been running back to the plans and calculations of the world, or else hastening impatiently forward to the waiting business of to-mor-

row, or to the gayeties and indulgences of the week to come, do you dream that Heaven's everlasting law will be repealed for you, and that some easy way will be opened by which you can enter the kingdom without kneeling in penitence to ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Dismiss, for your immortal soul's sake, dismiss that empty and wicked delusion!

And you, whoever you may be, in this assembly, man or woman, child or youth, who have come to your Lord's house with comfortable and self-flattering complacency, —imagining it is all well enough with you as you are,— conscience drugged to sleep by custom, your heart hardened to the heavenly invitation, no purpose in you to live the new life of faith, no cry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" no penitence for the past, no earnest longing for pardon, and no reaching out for the cross,— go back to your home. In God's name, dream that fatal dream no longer! Believe Him before whose word heaven and earth shall pass away! Hear Him, Jesus, whom Thou hast persecuted! Be assured that "except ye be converted, ye can not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

The love of the Father, the forgiveness of sin, the beauty of a consecrated character, the salvation of the Son of God, the life of Heaven, these are the honors that are waiting for your decision, and depend on your choice.

BRINGING UP IN THE FAITH.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

"TAKE this child away, and nurse it for me."—*Exod.* ii. 9.

THE child had been born in bondage, the son of a Hebrew slave. Worse still, as belonging to an enslaved race, under a freak of peculiar cruelty in the king, he was doomed to die by drowning in the Nile. But instantly, by no act or knowledge of his own, lying helpless there among the reeds, with nothing but a rush-boat between his tender body and the crocodiles' teeth, the winds and the water, he is lifted not only into liberty but into royalty; is made a member of the imperial family; has a home in a palace; and takes his unconscious place in the illustrious privileges of the Pharaohs.

It is not unlikely that you may have seen this instance of sudden change, which has been wrought in the whole condition and prospects of a mere infant, employed to illustrate that gracious, sacramental benefit which falls on the Christian child in baptism: for long ago students of sacred things discerned the typical meaning. It needs very little ingenuity to apprehend the points of this resemblance; and the analogy meets actual difficulties. The surprised and unreflecting mind inquires, "How can an outward action, or ceremony, like the baptism of water, alter the inward state and affect the real course of life?" It can do it just as the Egyptian princess, by

one gesture of her arm and one command from her lips, does in fact raise a new-born infant from the slave's cabin to the fellowship of monarchs. It is no miraculous or talismanic transformation. There is no violent revolution of the secret forces or moral circulations of the soul. But the child is set into *new relations*, and out of those new relations flow, as naturally as the stream through a new channel cut in the hills, new habitudes, new dispositions, a new life, a new heart, a new destiny. By the first birth, or generation, he was born into a world of bond-children, sinful. By this second birth, or regeneration,—"born again" the Saviour says "of water and of the Spirit,"—he comes into a family of faith, into a heritage of freedom, into a covenant of redemption, into Christ's spiritual household. Lying there, by nature, in the peril of his fall, the Church, which is the King's daughter in her glory, comes to him, looks in grace and love upon him, takes him up into her arms, adopts him with spiritual adoption, and, making this outward motion the sign of her mercy and the sacrament of her saving purpose, she renders him the heir of promise and seats him among the possible kings and priests unto God. How this clears away the confusion that has puzzled the understanding of men with libraries of controversy! We do not know all the secret methods and the reach of God's power in either sacrament. But, even though no interior transformations were wrought, yet, since holy character is the true key to the Redeemer's Kingdom, and since holy influences wrought by the Holy Spirit work out the new birth of that holy character, operating through unseen ministries, therefore "the old," in a sense very striking and clear has "passed away, and all things are become new." Your son or daughter is no more an unrecognized little alien out among the winds

and waters and savage ferocities of nature, but is gathered into a real shelter, and nourished on the real milk and meat of the immortal Word.

Observe that there is nothing here which insures the child's safety: nothing that precludes the possibility of his falling back again, if he chooses, into bondage; nothing that compels him to stay in his Lord's house or in any way overrules his liberty—the awful liberty to apostatize into guilt and perdition. Any moment he can go away from the royal mansion that has adopted him to the brick-yard, the taskmaster, and all the sorrow of his slavery. What has been so mercifully done for him is to make and welcome him a child of God, a member of Christ and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven, so that he may grow up to his filial stature, be nourished from the heart of Christ, and enter upon his inheritance. But if the folly and the sin are in him he can run into the far country;—stranger yet his parents and his sponsors can see him going without remonstrance; he can waste his substance; he can be a dead and withered branch, fit only to be burned; he can reject his birthright; he can love his own soul less than the Church and his sponsors have loved him, and can love his Saviour not at all; he can refuse to complete the baptismal vow, refuse to confirm the baptismal blessing, refuse to live the rest of his life according to this beginning.

And for that reason we go on now, beyond the baptism, to speak of the nurture and the training in "steadfast fear and love," as to-day's collect says, which by the mercy of Heaven may avert this dreadful peril, bringing out the perfect work in the salvation of the soul of the baptized child.

Under the figure of the King's daughter, having first received the child into her arms and set her seal of re-

ligious adoption upon him, having spread over him the covenant-protection and signed him with the sign of the cross, the Church places him back into the arms of his earthly father and mother,—his God-appointed guardians and educators for immortality, saying to them,—with what wonderful tenderness and depth of meaning!—"Take this child away, and nurse it for Me,—for Me."

What will it be to nourish your child for Christ?

In the first place, it will be to keep in your own heart a constant feeling of the charge laid upon you in the child's spiritual nature. The power of this feeling will be manifested not only in express words and direct actions, but in countless and daily signs of your faith which the child is sure to understand. A little recollection of what you have all seen in some family of your acquaintance will interpret what I mean. You enter some houses and, apart from all the articulate statements you hear from the lips of its inmates, apart from all regular professions, all the precepts repeated or the formal arrangements made, you presently become aware that the place has a character of its own; morally, religiously, it stamps a certain distinctive impression upon you. You find it impossible to analyze the elements of that impression, or to define precisely its origin. There seems to be a peculiar spirit of the dwelling which addresses itself silently to your perceptions, and insensibly discloses to you the prevailing temper that lives there;—the faith or the worldly-mindedness, the charity or the selfishness, the consecration or the vanity, that has somehow claimed the premises and taken secret possession of the rooms. It is not in language spoken, or in the furniture displayed, or in the books on the table, or in the pictures on the walls. It is rather in an unwritten and unuttered language put into all these, playing through them all,

from the life that the inmates are living. The Creator of our homes and the Father of all families has wrought this wonderful necessity of self-revelation, with this subtle sensibility that catches it, into us as a part of our fearful trust for each other, and we can not root it out. When they least consider it the master and the mistress of the household are weaving into it the influence of their own souls. They are fashioning the building for Christ and inviting Him to come in and abide, or they are forbidding Him to enter it. Many an unconsidered motion of the hand, many an unintentional look of the countenance, many an uncontrolled tone of the voice is helping to rear there a family-church, or a Pagan hostelry,—the blessed home of holy hearts, or the handsome lodging-place of a practical heathenism. God knows, and He even suffers the casual visitor to know, which it is to be.

Now this will help to suggest a great principle in the Christian training of children. The unconscious part of education, especially of the education of the soul, is always, probably, the more important part, yet the least considered. In other words *what we are* tells more on a child, in the long run, than what we say. Every father or mother is not only either for Christ or against Him in the house,—but they are perpetually, inevitably, helping to set out and enlist their offspring for Him or against Him. If they really receive the new-born soul as lent them directly from the Lord of life, if they are always calmly looking for the time when He will come and ask for the child again and will ask how he has been brought up, if they really hear Jesus Christ saying to them as they turn away from the font, "Take this child and nourish it for Me," then be sure that even when they least think it they will be fulfilling their charge. Many a time, when they are busy about their common work,

the child's eyes will be fixed upon them, solemnly, reading off the living commandments, and the illustrated beatitudes, and the story of the cross, and the outlines of Christ's image formed within, in manners, in faces, in impalpable volumes of gracious testimony. Those parents will work for their children and will play with them, will go out and come in, will take up their burdens and will cast their care on God, will discuss the news of the day and the trials of their calling and the economy of their livelihood and the fortunes of their neighbors and the Christian movements of their times, in such a way that the whole consistent current of influence shall be a repetition and enforcement of the Gospel. Thus, by Christ dwelling in them, they will give a more spiritual and deeper application to the beautiful prophetic statute of the older Law: "Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: that your days may be . . . . . as the days of heaven upon earth."

Again, those parents nourish the child for Christ who, after they have presented him in holy baptism, take care not to contradict the vow they have there made by a systematic indoctrination of him into ideas and fashions which Christ abhors. They do not come here to give him up by a ceremony to his Maker, and then begin steadily to baptize him themselves into the bitter and polluted spirit of this world. You will not, of course, commit so frightful a crime purposely,—a crime which

no efforts of later years can undo, no tears of a broken-hearted old age wash out, and no repentance at the judgment-seat atone for. You will not do it purposely; but be forewarned how terribly liable we all are to do it thoughtlessly by means and by customs that are plausibly disguised. Vain will be our formal Sunday exhortation to the children to be humble and self-denying if all the week they see us crowding on ourselves for the best places in society, watching to see what the favorites and the critics say of us, laying ambitious snares to catch admiration or applause, putting the most uncharitable construction on other people's mistakes, or following so hard after riches that even their young ears can hear the panting and the pulse of our mammonish pursuit. Vain enough, O worldly mother, will be your frigid exaction of the evening prayer if while the little lips repeat it you are not yourself on your knees by the pillow, but are finishing off a frivolous and luxurious day with the preparation of your vanity for the ostentation and flattery of the assembly to which your heart has already run. Vain will be your virtuous regulations, O sordid father, if your indifferent heart never prays at all, erects no altar to the Giver of your prosperity, reverences with no penitent worship the Redeemer of the sinful, but profanes His holy time, slights His sanctuary and hides from His sacraments.

There is a fashion which goes further in nursing your offspring for ruin even than this. You will follow it if you lead your children to understand that you regard them only as companions for this mortal life; only as playthings when they are amiable, and as annoyances when they are fretful; if you only coax or threaten them into submission lest they should disturb your comfort, and not as a sacred discipline in submission to God; if

you only indulge their appetites and pamper their lusts when you feel kindly to them, or buffet them in blind anger when you are offended by them; if you educate them on a plan which says plainly to them that their faculties were meant supremely to get money or reputation or to outstrip their fellows; if you outrage their sacred bodies, even in their babyhood, by sending them abroad dressed in fineries of your own pride to display in the streets the vulgar assumptions in which you are schooling them at home. This is not to teach them "what a solemn vow, promise and profession, they have here made by you;" this is not to acquaint them with the things which "a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health, bringing them up to a godly and a Christian life." Why take ye *such* thought for raiment? Think of them in their shrouds. Think of their angels which in Heaven do always behold the face of the Father. Take them away and train them up in modesty and lowliness of mind for the Saviour who has bought them with His blood,—born for them in the manger, dying for them on the cross;—"remembering always that baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour, Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness."

Turn to a more positive and attractive aspect of your obligation. You are to nourish your child into a familiar knowledge of his personal membership in Christ and his sonship in Christ's Kingdom. Assuming that the confession of this membership, and the acknowledgment of this filial relation, have been made for yourself, you have it for your inestimable privilege to unfold in your child's heart, by the help of the Spirit, the strong

and joyful feeling of his adoption. Address yourself with all the intelligence you have to this office which is now become the supreme engagement of your life. Seek instruction and direction wherever the voice of the Church bids you look for them. Search God's Scriptures for the exposition of those early and later covenants where the children of believers are folded in with their parents. Trace out the whole far-reaching and merciful plan in the Patriarchy and the Law and the Gospel. Behold the God of Abraham and of Isaac, of Israel and his seed after him, of the circumcision in the flesh and the washing of water, of the tabernacle where the young were blessed, and of the family in Christ. Learn to adore Him by one of His dearest and tenderest names as a covenant-keeping God. Explore the meaning of that glorious sentence of St. Peter, spoken in the first sermon ever preached in the Christian Church, "The promise is unto you and to your children." See, with a thanksgiving measured only by the love in your parental heart, how Jesus says, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," pondering what His mercy must be.

Tell your baptized child, then, of his birthright, and its seal. Tell him that his place in this Holy House is made for him and kept ready for him; that he is not an outcast, or a stranger, or too young to be cared for here; that the Church is a mother whose love is large enough for all, and that she yearns to comfort him and to keep him from sorrow, just as his mother at home yearns. Tell him that, like Mary, the Lord's mother, she watches him for the Lord's sake, and when she sees in him any token or germ of a true piety and reverential trust she treasures it up with a happy hope for him, and, scarcely daring to speak of it aloud, yet ponders it in her heart. Tell your child that he is made a member of this living

body of Christ; that you brought him, partly in obedience to a plain command and partly at the impulse of your own affection, getting him as near that beloved breast as you could, just as you would have gladly carried him to Jesus and put him into His arms for a blessing had Jesus been now on earth in the flesh: that you brought him not grudgingly but eagerly, and as soon as you could; not uncertainly but knowing in Whom you believed and confident of His sympathy. Tell him, too, that now being a branch on the Vine he is to grow and bear fruit, by all Christian nurture, by Bible and counsel, by watchfulness and worship: that all these things may so work together, for him and within him, that he shall walk in the bright path of a Christian advancement, from strength to strength, from honor to honor, from glory to glory, and finally pass through the grave and gate of death triumphantly to a joyful resurrection. This will be the fulfilment of your charge,—"Take the child away and nurse him for Me,"—your labor of love everlastingly rewarded.

Two other things must accompany this work; the one as a help, the other as a hope, but both of them powers, indispensable to your success.

The child is to be nourished with the habitual practice of intercessory prayer. It is remarkable how willing parents are to go to secular teachers for their child's accomplishments, over the ocean for his health, and to one another for advice,—to toil, and spend, and wait, and never to weary in their sacrifices,—yet all the while leave out that devout seeking in the closet, humble, patient, persevering, which is the only path to Him on whom every outward and inward gift depends,—whether life or health, learning or friends, prosperity or salvation. Perhaps, on the other hand, there may be some favored person here

on whose childhood this blessing of answered prayer descended like the dew of heaven: who knew, by childish instinct or observation, or by the holy stillness which sometimes spread through the house, how often the mother or the father used to be alone pleading for him, as Hannah for her Samuel: who, at hours made mysterious and almost supernatural by this intercourse with the mercy-seat, was led away quietly into some secret place where the whole soul of parental faith poured out its supplication that the Saviour would take and keep and sanctify him forever. Blessed are they in whose minds memories like these live! Take courage in your prayers! Whatever you may fail of in your knowledge, or your earthly providing, or your power of religious influence otherwise, have hope in your intercessions. Never despair that your child, however far his prodigal steps have gone, shall be brought home to his Father's house and yet inherit the promises,—for the eternal Advocate Himself makes intercession, and the Lord's "Ask and ye shall receive" is not blotted from the Gospel.

And therefore, finally, take this child away and nourish him for Christ with the *expectation of a blessing.* That expectation is to be not only a comfort to you on the way, but one of the spiritual forces with which you are to prevail. This Lord, who has lent you the little one, not only loves the importunities of His people; He delights in their largest confidences. He desires them to count liberally on His faithfulness. He is honored not when we distrust His willingness or His power to bless us, but when we venture everything on His invitation and are bold enough to entreat Him to remember His promises. Think, above all, who it is that saith, "Take the child;" know that the gift itself is a token of His goodness; that with the dear life which is more precious to

you than your own He lends you also grace and strength to nourish it: and that even if you faint and fall by the way the assurance shall be repeated over your grave, and accomplished to your offspring, that He will be a Father to the fatherless, and the orphan's God.

There are families where the young die first. Here and there among those who listen is a worshipper with the hand pressed on the heart, saying with anguish, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me!" Whereever the mound may be under which the body sleeps, and whether frosts or flowers cover it, the boy, the girl, is not dead, but sleepeth. We are of one family, in one Church, by one baptism, in the one faith of the Life eternal, and of Him who has brought it to light. Instead of leaving the child with you and saying, "Take it and nurse it for Heaven and for Me," lo! He has taken it in a sure compassion to Himself, to nurture it in a better climate, to give it back to you again; perhaps that the small hands may beckon you upward, certainly that you may cling to the mighty hand of your Redeemer more steadfastly through all the night-watches of your life, till "the day break and the shadows flee away."

EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY CARE.

Third Sunday after Trinity.

"CASTING all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."—*I Pet.* v. 7.

THERE are, then, two kinds of care. One is a care that we have no right to keep but are to cast off:—"your care." The other is a care which is felt by the Almighty Lord Himself:—"for He careth for you." It adds to the force of this contrast, and at the same time it opens to us the tenderness and sympathy of God, that the very reason given for casting away our care is that God keeps His. "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." We need have no fear, *i. e.*, that the abandonment of our anxieties will leave us unprovided, or undefended. Better provision will be made for us than we could possibly have contrived for ourselves. This is the wealth and the wonder of God's compassion. Faithful hearts are not only freed from the painful pack that galled them, but, as if their deliverance were not enough, and as if one blessing were only a groundwork for another, the oversight and the foresight they needed are thenceforth furnished for them; patient and willing shoulders receive the load we threw down: eyes of sharper vigilance than ours watch for us. Simply because we were willing to loosen our troubles and let them fly, we have not only peace but plenty. Divine energies that never weary, fidelity that never flags,

wisdom that never errs, and affections that never droop or wander, uphold us. Why do we not trust such a friendship as this?

In this sentence from the epistle for this Sunday consider,

I. What human care is,

II. What the Divine care is; and,

III. How to exchange the human for the Divine.

The first difficulty in ridding ourselves of irreligious care is in distinguishing it from that better kind of care which is a duty. The best Christians see that life is scarcely possible and certainly is not useful without a certain amount of a certain kind of pains. In fact, a chief difference between the man whose life is a noble Christian benefaction and the man whose life is a miserable heathenish failure is that the one is careful and the other is careless. In this sense, care means the diligent use of our faculties. It is the scrupulous discharge of every trust by the good steward and soldier of Jesus Christ. It gathers up the fragments that nothing be lost. It creates industry, economy, tidiness, the maintenance of families, integrity: and these are all Christian virtues. Any lack of them dishonors God. Disorder, unthrift, uncleanliness, waste, in any house, are vices: and they all follow from carelessness. No amount of religious sentiment will justify them. Care in this sense is what distinguishes the household of a Christian family from the cabin of a barbarian. All growth in goodness, victory over temptation, conversion of bad habits, every kind of human excellence, come by painstaking; *i. e.*, by care. A negligent or improvident Christian is a blemish in the Body of Christ, which ought to be without spot or wrinkle, clean and whole.

The Scriptures mark the same distinction. While St.

Paul bids the Philippians "be careful for nothing," he commends the Corinthians for *their* carefulness, classing it with the graces of self-purification and zeal. He says he would have the disciples "without carefulness"; yet there is plainly a limit to this recommendation, for he exhorts them to "be careful to maintain good works," and takes upon himself the "care of the churches." How shall we at once have care and cast care away? How take Christ's yoke and burden upon us, as He commands us, and yet lay them off upon Him, as He invites us? There must be a principle that reconciles these apparent disagreements.

It will not do to answer that the difference is one of quantity. It is common to say that the great mistake about earthly care is in allowing too much of it; that it is innocent in moderate measures, and wrong only when it runs to excess. But there are kinds of care so purely selfish or sordid, so utterly of the earth earthy, so poisoned with envy, or avarice, or the passion for admiration, that they are evil irrespective of all questions of more or less. Their quality is so essentially opposite to the spirit of Christ that no mere diminution of quantity will rectify it. Besides, the attempt to rid your mind of the mischief by a mere calculation of the amount you may allow must fail, for want of any measure of what is allowable. Christ does not form souls into His likeness by such rules. He breathes into them new desires, binds them to Himself by new affections, baptizes them into a new spirit. Choked with the cares of this world you can never clear yourself and come into spiritual health and liberty by balancing off so much care against so much carelessness. You can not cast your burden on the Lord by putting one of your hands in His, and holding fast by the burden with the other.

Equally vain is it to undertake to strike out a Christian course by saying we will distinguish between the objects of our anxiety,—as by being careful for the spirit and negligent of the body; careful for faith and hope and charity, but negligent of daily business, household, and society. This is not Christ's righteousness. He always, it is true, in His conversation, sets the spiritual world above the material. But He never encourages contempt of outward duties or indifference to the details of our employment. It is *in* these, in fact, that faith, hope, and charity have their school and field of exercise, without which they would droop, like muscles never used, or vegetation in the dark. Unquestionably the kingdom of God's righteousness is not meat and drink; yet with most of us the getting and using of the means of living fills up the largest part of time; so that unless our righteousness should keep us company there we should be living unrighteous lives. Jesus shows us the Father Himself taking care of the fowls of the air, of sheep and oxen, and of the little fibres of our bodily frames. He prays for His chosen disciples not that they may be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil, so as not to lose their souls in the world's passion and pride. Whatever care is right at all is right here, as well as hereafter. And the burden that we are to cast on the Lord is the burden of the life that now is.

At this point precisely we strike the true distinction and the Christian doctrine. All right and lawful care is just that which we can at all times, and in all places, carry with us to our Lord, to rest it on that sympathizing heart in Him which has already carried our griefs, and healed the disorder of the world by the stripes of His sacrifice. It is the care that we can commit in perfect confidence to Him, willing that He should either

remove it from us altogether or lay some portion of its pain back upon us, as He will. It is the care which keeps the responsibility of life without despairing under it; bears the cross and yet feels evermore that the Crucified is bearing it; is content to be sick, or destitute, or hard-worked, or misunderstood, or solitary, to do well and suffer for it, to have the way to comfort hedged up and only the way to new-made graves and fresh disappointments kept open; which can look round on a pinched estate, on children denied the liberal culture to which they aspire, on coarse companions, ill-tempered domestics, exacting employers, and a lengthening procession of sorrowful years,—can do all this, and do it cheerfully, do it bravely, and do it thankfully, because it can simply say, "My Lord, the great burden-bearer, is with me: He wills it: He too has been sick and in prison; He has groaned, and wept, and bled; He has known poverty, loneliness, travail of soul, and been reviled and tortured for loving men and helping them; He too has seen His friends die, His own blessed work resisted and put back, and has waited all the days of His appointed time, till His hour came. My burden, then, is upon Him. I feel it lightened at the thought. I will cast it upon Him, as He shall enable me, by faith, more and more. If I must suffer on in the flesh, it is a blessed kind of suffering. It is willing suffering, and *un*willingness is the only intolerable burden. Rid of that, my future care is gone. Besides, ONE burden, that which makes all others heavy and sharp, unforgiven sin,—an evil heart of unbelief and a life at war with God,—this He has taken wholly upon Himself, offering me back only pardon and relief and peace instead. Blessed be His name! "Spread over me, my Lord, the shadows of that cross! My burden is gone, because I am permitted to bear it with Thee,

after Thee, and for Thy dear sake! Thou only art holy! All glory be to Thee, O Lord, most High!"

This is heavenly care. It does not ask exemption from trial, nor does it withhold for an instant one effort of duty. It nerves soul and body for every Christian labor with tenfold earnestness and carefulness. It changes the cross. It puts the whole soul into such friendliness with God that His will and the disciple's will play together and flow on in one tranquil tide. There is no chafing, collision, complaint. Peace reigns throughout the bright empire of the mind.

Earthly care, on the other hand, the forbidden care, is that which we can not carry with us to God or cast contentedly into His keeping. It clings to us as a creature of this world clings to this world. It hinders the affections when they try to rise heavenward and drags them back. It doubts whether Christ is still near at hand and His grace sufficient. It reads the glorious promises of the Gospel with an absent mind, like some unreal legend. It murmurs fretfully, "No trial is like my trial; other troubles I could bear; this has no explanation, no profit, and turns no side of it to the sun." It grinds at every kind of work it undertakes as in a treadmill, under a taskmaster, rejoicing in no liberty, animated with no hope. All crosses are compulsory. Some cares shoot through us like shocks of neuralgic pain, making us quiver and tremble, as when great griefs concentrate their torture upon us. Other cares press with silent, leaden weights, like the dull aching of the head that drains vigor, drop by drop, out of the brain and all the drooping dependencies of nerve and limbs. The forms of the burden vary. But the heaviness of them all is the heart's distance from God. The sun is hid. There is no wide horizon, no light spring-

ing of the will, no joy to break the bondage of the law. This is earthly care, unprofitable, unreasonable, unholy care,—the care that wears out men and women before their time, the care that sours and saddens God's world, the care that slowly kills the body under the name of a thousand different diseases, and is the beginning of death to the spirit. It is the care you can not, only because you will not, cast upon Him who careth for you.

We can take this principle with us into each of the three great regions where anxiety is most apt to become excessive; and in each of them we shall find it a principle of regulation as well as of consolation. We have a world without us, a world within us, and a world before us, where our responsibility extends, and where responsibility is accompanied at every step with care.

In the world without us we have seen how carefully we are called to live. The powers of thought and knowledge have to be carefully trained, and the powers of perception to keep careful watch; the powers of judgment must carefully discriminate and the powers of action must carefully work. Without these there would be no enterprise or art, no science or success; institutions of learning and of mercy would perish; Christian missions would cease, the schools of the Prophets be closed, the circulation of the Bible stop, and the spread of the everlasting Gospel be arrested midway. Yet one man moves through all the eager round of his business a joyless, careworn, overcalculating victim of his interests and his craft. Another executes every labor with just as thorough fidelity, and yet every eye that watches him can see that he is free, can trace no line of crushing care upon him, because his work is under the religious power of the man, not the man under the tyranny of his work. The one, after the faithful application of his

faculties, casts his care upon Him, Who, as he knows by a blessed experience, careth for him, and rests his burden on his Lord. The other hugs it to his breast, as infatuated animals press deeper into the wound the rankling arrow that is poisoning them. The one commits his business every day to God, and is satisfied to know that the Almighty is his Father. The other trusts no strength or sagacity but his own, and has to drag the whole length of his chain behind him. Blessed is the man who, having done his best, can settle himself calmly into God's order for him, put anxiety behind him at the end of each day's work, reckon results as God's alone, believe that God takes care of ships and harvests as well as of rituals and revelations, and so cast every burdensome care on Him.

There is a world before us. The very mystery of that veiled country seems to tempt the imagination to people it with alarms. "Take no thought for the morrow" is not a prohibition of prudent forecast, but of the care which prevents our doing well the work of to-day by agitating us with fears of what is to come. Take no thought for the morrow, *as to-morrow*, as something lying beyond our reach, outside of our control, held by God's hand for purposes of His own. Accept the heavenly order. Behold the lilies how they grow. Dismiss the strange propensity to go out of the way and invent occasions of distress, "casting the fashion of uncertain evils." Care for a life in Christ. Seek ye first His kingdom and He will care for you, and for the spirit of heaviness will give you garments of praise.

There is a world within us, where the spiritual formation of us goes on and our eternity is making for us every hour. Doubtless, there are some minds that never thought of it as possible that any care about their spir-

itual salvation and the things of religion could be wrong. Yet if you would come to the heights of holy living with Christ and His saints you must learn that impatience does not cease to be impious because it goes to Church, nor does a complaining spirit honor the Redeemer though it uses the vocabulary of piety. When David remonstrates with himself it is really the Holy Ghost that is pleading with him: "Why art thou cast down, and why art thou so disquieted? hope thou in God!" The Church is deadened in its piety by members that distrust Him who bought them with His blood, and question promises that are plain on the pages of both the Testaments. If your anxiety is only about your salvation as a selfish and exclusive thing, it is earthly care and needs to be cast off. If we could only lay off the burdens which God never put upon us, but which self-love and ambition and pride have fastened there, we could bear the rest. The care that depresses, paralyzes, bewilders, is never of God. The grand difficulty even with Christians is that they think to cast their burden on the Lord, but still go staggering and stumbling under its old weight, careful about possessions, livelihood, health, the morrow, about food and family, about sins that have been atoned for and about the shutting of gates which Christ has opened. We take our cares to God in prayer; but even while we pray one hand seems to keep hold of them, and no sooner is the supplication ended than we take them up and go on anxious and fearful as before. "Up the highway of the hill, fenced on either side with a wall, did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending, and upon the place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with

the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from his back, till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and said with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death.' Now as he stood looking and weeping at the cross, three shining ones came to him, and saluted him with 'Peace be unto thee.' The first said to him, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' The second stripped him of his rags and clothed him with change of raiment. The third 'set a mark on his forehead,' and gave him a roll, with a seal upon it, which he made him look on as he ran, and bade him that he should give it in at the Celestial Gate. So they went their way."

"The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."

THE PERISHING AND THE RENEWED MAN.

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

"But, though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."—*II Cor.* iv. 16.

One of the first things we are all taught, and one of the last things we actually learn, is the fact that each one of us is of two parts, and that the inward is just as real as the outward. From the first breath we draw in the nurse's arms, to the last when we die, we carry this fact about with us. Yet if we really learnt it, *i. e.*, if we got by heart what all our reflections and all the sermons pronounce the fact to be, we should have to take in the consequences and the practical responsibilities of that fact, so that we should become new creatures; and *then* that would be literally true of every one of us which the apostle here so sublimely says: our inward man would be renewed day by day.

There is this momentous difference between speculative and practical knowledge;—between a truth merely admitted to the mind and the same truth so felt that it quickens the will and rouses us to act. It is so with all the messages of God.

The text stands in the great passage where, among other vivid contrasts, that one between "things temporal" and "things eternal" finally comes in which lends its language to the Collect for this day. St. Paul declares in the text, however, something more than that

our life is twofold, outward and inward. He states two other truths; or rather he takes one of them for granted, as a thing so plain that every body must admit it, viz., that the outward man perisheth, and *then* he goes on to say, But what if it does perish? Let it perish There is one way that we can afford to lose it, can let it drop without a sorrow or a fear, can even watch its wasting with cheerfulness, and *live* without it. To those who actually apprehend the former of these two truths,—viz., that our outward man is not only of perishable materials but has actually begun to perish, is wearing out in one part or another,—see what a support is offered in the second truth, that there is an inward man, out of sight, imperishable, renewed day by day. Try to realize that. Is there one human being in all the world, living in a human body, who has not an interest in this mystery,—this splendid secret about him, now revealed?

Revealed! for to the brightest intellects unillumined by Christ this doctrine of a twofold life was nothing but the guess-work of philosophers or the fancy-work of poets. And yet, since the same Creator made both the Bible and Nature, and since the God and Father of Jesus Christ our Lord is also the Builder of the trees and the animals and the whole visible frame of things, it has pleased Him to set some types of this great Truth even in objects that we see. There is a fruit-tree growing at your door. Wood and bark and leaves make up its visible figure. It has a definite lifetime. Every year it changes a little for the better or the worse. Watch it closely, let your eye be instructed by observation or science, and every season gives some sign that it is growing old. You or your father perhaps planted the seed. You or your son will gather the dead branches

to burn them. The end is as certain as the beginning. And the process never ceases an instant. Does every thing about the tree, then, perish? No. Underneath this visible form and color that you can touch and see there is a mysterious power at work that you can neither touch nor see. It is the secret energy, the mysterious, vitalizing power, wonderfully intertangled in the fibre and circulating in the sap, never tasted, never caught, never analyzed, never described, which you can only call the principle of life. It is what makes it a tree. This does not perish, or grow old, or decay. When this particular tree has done its whole work, yielded all its fruit, shed its last leaf, and gone to the fire, that secret element of life is all hidden away in some seeds that survive. Another hand may plant them, and they again will grow, and, through the same beautiful cycle of germ and root and stock and bough and leaf and flower and fruitage, the undying power of life will fulfil its perpetual revolutions. You may say that while the outward tree perishes, hidden under that is an inward tree, which is renewed again and again.

To-morrow you pass a cornfield. Last April that ground was bare and brown, no growth upon it. Now the thousand green stalks and leaves wave in the wind, in lusty life. Some weeks hence, a few yellow streaks will publish the beginning of death. Then the dry rattle; then the sickle; and in November the year's pageant will have passed by and the ground will be as bare and brown as when the last snow melted from it. Yet in the granary is stored up the life of the harvest, the character or substance of the crop, the seed-corn of summers to come. The outward part returns to the earth as it was, dust to dust; the inward part is renewed, multiplied, and lives on.

We are constantly recognizing this contrast between the perishable and the permanent, a cheap outside and a vital substance within, in familiar language. We speak of the husk and the grain, the rind and the kernel, the shell and the heart, the body and the life. These terms become expressive symbols of a corresponding distinction in our own double constitution,—the dying flesh and the deathless soul.

Some of you are more conversant with machinery than with husbandry. You have only to open your eyes on the materials of your occupation to witness a similar contrast there. Those levers, wheels, rollers, blades, valves, are continually wearing out. There is incessant consumption. The stoutest and best tempered mechanism, growing loose or thin by friction, perisheth day by day. But there is a subtle power of nature operating through it which never wears out, and there is generally some solid result which survives the machine. The tools we use in every handicraft break and are cast aside as not worth mending. But the fruit of our industry, often at least, remains, a lasting benefit.

Again, in almost all our *employments* there are two such elements. First there is the external apparatus necessary to carry on the business, and always perishing. Besides this, there is the less palpable but far more important and abiding product of the business in the man that does it. The implements, the ships, the books, the merchandize, the rolling-stock, the current expense, the raw material, perish. But underneath these, out of sight, there is the professional, the mercantile, the agricultural, the scientific *character*, which, amid all this visible consumption, is renewed day by day. Even a great nation, by the enormous outlay and reluctant sacrifice of a desolating war of defence, may be replenishing all

the nobler sources of a permanent peace, and a noble, manly, national honor. At any rate, and in all times, the individual and his cotemporaries disappear, but the national character goes on forming. One generation passeth away and another cometh; the outward national man perisheth; but the inward man of the nation, its organic social life, or spirit, is renewed day by day, generation after generation.

It is by lines of thought like these, carried out in almost any direction, that even nature, which is of God, illustrates for us, imperfectly, the solemn doctrine of the apostle. When I hear men refer to the springtime, the blossoms and the butterfly as if these were the only natural emblems of the everlasting life, I wonder they do not rather see in the whole daily proceeding of God's universe, and in the daily works of their own hands, an evidence of their immortal destiny, and of the continual presence of an unseen power underneath the outward appearance. We stand all the time before this twofold mystery of life; one part is the form, forever changing, dissolving, dropping off, sliding away; but, as a direct consequence of this succession of appearances, there is another part,—call it power, or principle, or law, or life, or character, as you will,—which renews itself and does not die.

But now open your Bible. In what new clearness and brightness this truth is written there! Here we have the full and perfect key to all these signs and ciphers in nature, which otherwise would be but an unintelligible riddle. Here we pass, at one leap, beyond all faint intimations, out into the broad sunshine, where life and immortality are brought completely to light. When St. Paul speaks of the "inward man" and its renewal, he does not mean any unconscious powers in

matter, or any mere "natural" forces of character; he does not mean any intellectual or social or business life or skill; he does not mean any result of a progressive education or development of abilities such as man can provide for himself, or one man can furnish to another. His eyes are fixed on a more marvellous transformation and a higher glory. St. Paul writes for you. Something about you is transient. In this mortal part he includes the accidents of property, the visible gains of labor and calculation, the surroundings of estates and furniture and dress; and, more than these,—all intellectual accomplishments, social refinements, and advantages of rank and position which are not consecrated by faith and made a part of the spiritual man. "Whether there be tongues they shall cease: and whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away." To be spiritually-minded,—that and that only is life, "renewed day by day." This "inward man" is one simple, definite thing. It is that wherein the living Christ dwells, lives, through faith. Self is given up. Self-will, pride, ambition, envy, unbelief, sensuality, are emptied out. There is not only a formal and intellectual belief in an atonement wrought out by Him ages ago, but a hearty and loving reception of Him, as a present and personal Life, the very substance, breath and power of the inward man going on from grace to grace and from glory to glory, changed into the same image, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Day by day the true Christian soul's inner life grows deeper, stronger and richer. It is not only a future immortality, but the heavenliness begins here; it is tasted now. It holds in it the promise, and it obeys the law, of an unlimited sanctification. Never satisfied with the holiness attained, its large expectation is that of an un-

bounded faith, and according to its faith it is done, till this worn-out body is exchanged for the resurrection body, awaking in the Lord's likeness, and satisfied with it. In this way and no other the believer is able to look calmly on the changes of his mortality, on the flight of time, on the advance of age, on pain and infirmity, on disorder, on death itself. The outward man perisheth. Let it perish; its perishing will only set the inward man free, in an infinite and everlasting liberty. So martyrs sing their lives away in the fire. So sufferers in our common dwellings give God thanks in the midst of agony, their eyes fixed on a continuing city and a more enduring substance. At the head of them all stands St. Paul himself, in the forefront of this long battle with the world, with the whole armor of God upon him. And these are the words that ring exultingly out of his lips, down the lines of the Christian ages after him: "Neither count I my life dear to myself, that I might win Christ and be found in Him. I am now ready to be offered. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness: I die daily, but day by day my crown is nearer: the Lord will give it me at that great day."

Healthy, happy, vigorous youth! Every day your body is gaining strength. Even pulses, easy movements, balanced forces, light limbs, every organ of your outward life set firm and yet elastic in its place! So full of health that you do not really know what that blessing is,—so unconsciously happy that you wonder what old men mean when they call you happy;—bless your God and praise Him, the Maker of that painless frame. Who then will say that this "outward man" of yours, which maketh daily increase, is perishing? The clock says so, with every second's stroke. The sun-dial, where the shadow moves round and round and never

returns, says so. This growth and gain of your body are only a prelude and a preparation for the inevitable decay which is close at hand. A few swift months more, and there will be some sign given that the hill-top is crossed; some symptom of diminished power, less endurance, slackened activity; or, sooner yet, a sharp sense of disease. There will come a halting and a faintness. No reluctance, no contrivance, no medicine, no stimulant, no voyage, can hide from you the fact that your outward man is perishing. It is profoundly true that there is not one amongst us here to-day, the youngest or the strongest, that has not begun to die. What will the end be: will the end be a coffin, and a funeral, and the shovelled earth on the coffin lid? Oh, you would not have it so! Where, then, is the inward life? What shall be the end of that? Think of it, and make your answer to God. The inward man is the soul. The soul has only one life, which is life in Christ. The life it now lives in the flesh it is meant to live by faith in the Son of God. It has but one death. Unbelief, selfishness, sensuality, passion, vanity, the love of the world, kill it. They are its death as surely as poison is the death of living flesh. If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if, through repentance and faith, ye do bring under and consecrate the body, then through the Spirit ye shall live. Nay, then ye do live already. The inward man will stand, young immortally, strong in the Lord, numbered with God's saints in glory everlasting

Here, finally, is comfort for old age. You have found that long-worn and tired body of yours less prompt than it used to be to do the bidding of your will, or else it does it with a slower step and a feebler execution. But if your old age is Christian, the Maker and Father of

your life will see, as He has promised, that your inward man, which is His image, shall never die. The house not made with hands awaits you. Let the earthly tabernacle crumble. You will only see more of the sky. As an old Christian poet sang,

> "The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
> Lets in new light thro' chinks that time has made."

For youth and for age alike there is one life, one Lord, one open heaven.

"Put ye on the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness." This is the apostolic intercession:—"For this cause," "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in *the inner man;* that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God!"

THE VISION OF HEAVENLY HELP.

Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

"And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man: and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."—*II Kings* vi. 15–17.

Here, as in many parts of the Old Testament, what took place in the outward world before man's eyes is an image of something that takes place in the inward world of the spirit, where no man's eye sees.

What I have read is a record of things that actually happened. The servant and the master, and the horses and the chariots, were all there. Yet there are two meanings: one literal, and the other a meaning in figure. First, there is a contrast between the men. It is not a contrast in their external condition. To be sure, one is master and the other a servant: they *are* of two different classes in society: two classes which passion and ignorance and the arts of selfish demagogues easily array in hate and suspicion against each other, but not made to be enemies in God's order for the world, and capable of dwelling together, as they did in this family of the prophet, in mutual trust and good-will,—master and servant: the strong and the weak. It is not, then, a dis-

tinction of outward rank which creates the real deep contrast between the two men; it never is. Before the common peril of the Syrian army they are alike: if they are delivered it must be by the same Almighty Deliverer.

Yet one of these men sees nothing but difficulty; the other sees help. Their bodily senses are alike. They look out from the same tent-door on the same great host encompassing the city with horses and chariots. It is not now a question of military skill or defence; it is too late for precaution; and the men are not soldiers; whatever the faults of the government, these persons are, both master and servant, as helpless as the children in any invaded village or bombarded seaport. One of them sees nothing but the danger, and sinks in despair before it. "Alas, my master, how shall we do?" Elisha, referring to no human army, answers, "Fear not; they that be with us are more than they that be with them." The contrast, then, is clearly in something *within* the men; some power of seeing with an interior sight,—some perception unlike common knowledge and not dependent on the ordinary education of the eyes. Where the servant sees only impending overthrow and destruction the Prophet sees abundant reinforcements. Setting aside for the moment what is supernatural in the narrative, the element of miracle, and keeping only what is common to the Prophet and other believing men, the contrast is this:—One of the men believes in God and in the secret powers by which He always appears for His people and takes care of them. To the other, when earthly support fails, the cause fails and every thing is lost. There is nothing but dead matter. There is no army in the sky, no spiritual ally, no faith in God.

Mark the two consequences resulting. In the latter case the first feeling is fear: for fear is only the instinc-

tive acknowledgment that the weakness in ourselves is overmatched by strength in our adversary. Without faith we are afraid of losses, of diseases, of a rival, of calumny, of death; we drop ourselves so far from God that we can not feel His almighty power and peace bearing us up and making us safe.

With fear goes discouragement. The weakness aggravates itself; because, the less one believes he can succeed, the less he can succeed. Terror is always depressing. It ties the limbs and palsies the muscles. All that we depend on for resistance or aggression is scattered by it: the sharpness and command of our faculties, self-possession, judgment, resolution, energy. The reason those of us who really desire to be good do not conquer the evil in our hearts, and stand out on God's side, is that we doubt whether Christ is as ready and as mighty as He has said.

Then in the dismay comes helplessness. Just as fright produces that debilitated condition of the body that we mean when we say it unnerves or unmans us, having for its signs trembling and paleness, so it shakes and loosens also the sinews of the soul. When the heart sinks the will falters with it. We shall do but little in God's service when we doubt whether God is as strong as Satan, whether He is good as His promises, and whether, if we do our full part both on our knees and in the field, He will fill our mountains with horses and chariots for victory. How many Christians, instead of fighting their way on, heartwhole and clearsighted, through their everyday hindrances are practically standing still and saying, "Alas, how shall we do"?

Directly opposite to these debilitating effects of unbelief are those of the faith that sees spiritual realities as they are and God's promise as it stands: namely, con-

fidence, courage, and action; confidence, because an army with allies coming in sight over the mountains always gains much more than the mere numerical addition of the regiments advancing; it gains in the redoubling of its *own* strength by a cheer which is the presage of triumph. So in an individual heart; the clearer its sense of the express presence and personal interest of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, and the heartier its hearing of all the pledges that the Saviour makes in the Gospel, "I will be with thee always, I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee, no man shall pluck thee out of My hand," so much the more its certainty of that help carries it cheerfully through the largest and the smallest troubles. *Courage*, too; for confidence *is* courage. Even in secular enterprises, a man's confidence of being equal to his undertaking, unless it is spoilt by rashness or by vanity, is a great condition of his accomplishing it. "I can" is as much the confession of the hero as of the boaster, only the hero carries it in his breast and the boaster on his lips. But in the Christian conflict the courage is steadier and more invincible because its strength is not in self but in the submission of self to God. This is true power, and inexhaustible power. With the Prophet the believer says, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." So action follows, the child of courage, as courage is of faith. All the energies a man has are the willing and nimble servants of his brave belief. You hear shallow men talk of the inefficiency of religious creeds. Doubtless creeds are inefficient when we say them without faith, for they are falsehoods then: to say a creed is to say, "I believe." But *really to believe* is the most efficient and commanding power on earth: sincere creeds are the mighty masters of the world. All the action, all

the righteous practice of Christendom, comes out of them. The character of our lives depends on what we see with our inward eyes, whether a blank, or mountains full of horses and chariots of fire:—the earth only, or an open heaven.

Therefore, a practical principle drawn from the text is the close connection of our safety or salvation with our inward sight, or our faith. To despair of help is to be helpless. To *expect* success, on lawful grounds, and to an indefinite extent, is to gain it. To have the power of Christ, the Eternal King, with us it is only necessary to see the already existing fact that He is with us. We fail to receive the blessing of life simply because we do not open our eyes to Him who is ready, stands at the door and holds help out to us. Hence, another principle is the nature of the change from one of these two states to the other: from the Servant's state to the Prophet's. When, from the blindness of our natural life and a selfish heart, we do first behold Christ with the seeing eye, and hear Him with the hearing ear, that is conversion. The change is in us, not in Him who has loved us from the beginning, and is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The mountains are there, they were there before, they will be there when we are gone, and the heavenly hosts are encamped upon them. The Lord is round about His people as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, *for evermore*, and His angels are with Him. Do we lift up our eyes faithfully and see? The inward salvation brings the outward salvation. "The mind is its own place," not of itself *alone*, but according as it opens to the Spirit or refuses to open. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" It is the doubter that sinks.

If we look at the course of the great moral reforma-

tions and revolutions that have ennobled mankind, we shall see that they have always been achieved through providential leaders who have had just this spiritual discernment,—as the apostle names it,—to see spiritual realities, to see Christ, to see truth and right, to see a glorious future, where other men saw nothing. So seeing, and so believing,—for such seeing *is* believing,—they have been willing to work on and to wait on against all odds, against the contempt and ridicule of the blind and timid servants of earthly policy who have cried out upon them that their plans were impracticable and their hopes visionary. Twelve men saw the mountains full of horses and chariots of fire after their Lord had ascended, and they roused and converted the world. The fire was among them in tongues at Pentecost; they bore it out in torches from one city and one continent to another; they planted it along the sea-coasts and in the capitals of Asia and Europe; they lightened the dark world with it;—nothing daunted because nothing doubting. Centuries after one man alone saw these mountains, in England, John Wycliffe, when all Christendom had gone blind. Six or eight men in our day had eyes to see them, and by them modern missions moved the immense mass of indifference in the sleeping churches, and threw open all heathendom to the Gospel. Every missionary enterprise has to be begun in just this open-eyed, prophetic fashion. Everywhere such servants of the Most High have to stand out fearlessly against the sarcasm if not the sword of people who see no such thing. "Where there is no vision the people perish." You take the side of the minority, you move on to your difficult post of duty alone, you refuse to rush with the rest into the popular excitement, you are obliged to be singular because your con-

science can not bend and enslave itself to the bad custom or prejudice of your class; and you are taunted with sacrificing yourself to an abstraction, and with throwing away comfort, power, usefulness even, with no chance of success. But never forget that most of the great practical ideas which have at last become embodied in institutions, of law and learning and love, have begun as abstractions and have gone through the bad repute of that origin. Somebody saw them by faith, beheld their presence afar off, was willing to be sneered at as a dreamer—visionary only because he saw God's visions and the Prophet's visions;—somebody was brave for them in that suspicious stage of their history. Mountains, undiscernible to others, were to them full of armies with banners. Hence those ideas grew from being visions into substantial powers. Such men walk in their daily paths by a forelooking faith. Take that immortal roll of heroic names in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews: the very wonder and glory of their constancy, when they "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens," was that they "endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

From these public examples we pass in to the scenes of our own personal warfare with sin. We fail so often and faint with fear so often because we do not see God's supports and heavenly reinforcements. We see the hindrances to duty, to patience and self-control, in our homes and our business, but not that abundant strength and blessing which wait all around us, invisibly, in every room and every path. There are the obstinate customs of society and the self-absorbed lives of men: how can we gather courage to go to them and tell

them the truth? We doubt whether we are fit to be receivers of the inestimable gift and Bread of Life; and it is true enough we are not; but all the more do we need to remember that God has often chosen instruments to use as weak as we, making His own strength the more manifest *through* their weakness, and providing chariots of His own.

Why are we always quick to see the opposing circumstance, the difficulty, and not the heavenly helpers that encamp about us? A little more quickness and clearness of sight, dear friends, and we should know that the laws of Eternal Justice and Truth are still there, pledged to our defence, so long as we keep on their side. The Divine Constitution of things, framed for good and not evil, for mercy and not cruelty, for love not wrath and clamor and evil-speaking, is still there. These slanders and revilings that torment you, to be sure, are real things,—real as the Syrian troops on the hills of Dothan. On the side of the oppressors there may be power. But there are other armies on other mountains near by; and "they that be with us," says faith's smallest flock, "are more than they that be with them."

Some minds admit as much as this, but are not ready to go farther. But there is something further for them. A little more faith yet, and they will see other helpers doing for them what the law could never do, in that it was weak through the flesh. There is a secret grace of God. There is a promised pardon. There is a blessed propitiation for our sins past. There are express covenants for shelter and for confidence. There are peaceful sacraments. There are unseen souls,—"angels," like those who came and ministered to Jesus after His temptation, "all saints," waiting for Him to appear the second time, to see Him and reign with Him. These are our

helpers. We hear a great deal about the strong and swift material forces playing through the world of men in our time. But as the men of science become men of thought and of faith—as the knowing men become wise men—they see farther, see deeper, and see higher. They see that behind all material forces are playing mightier and grander powers which are spiritual; that the real world is not the one we handle; and that the glory of the universe is God. The power by which this opening of the eyes and this increasing light are given, is pronounced here: "Elisha *prayed*, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see." When all our courage and knowledge are too little to bless our fellow-men, or to lead even a little child into God's kingdom, the holy privilege of intercession is left; none can take it away. In our Saviour's miracle of the giving of sight to the blind, the blind man prays for himself,—"Lord, that mine eyes might be opened!" Be that our prayer, —for faith which is the seeing eye. And then, as with the rejoicing subject of that cure, there will be increasing light;—at first we may see dimly, only "men as trees walking," but afterwards as the vision is more and more cleansed and brightened, as unbelief is more and more helped from above, behold, the horses and chariots of fire!

ADVENTURING FOR GOD.

Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

"By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."—*Heb.* xi. 8.

There is now to be considered another soul than that Patriarch's; another calling; another inheritance: but the principle of the obedience in the "going out, not knowing whither," is the same.

We can hardly read those words, given us to-day to be read, without at once thinking how all this common life around us would be both simplified and made noble if men generally, in laying out their plans and carrying on their ordinary work, were moved and guided in the same divine way!—*i. e.*, if they inquired first, at every important decision, every new start and every new turn in the road,—*where their Lord called them to go;*—and then, leaving all other questions aside, were to go straight on in that path: straight on, no matter what comfort, like the familiar country that the Patriarch was leaving, they might be obliged to give up, and no matter how untried or bleak the regions before. It is certainly remarkable, and it shows how wonderfully independent God's ways with us are of all our "progress" and "civilization," of which we boast so much, that over the vast tract of four thousand years, through periods so immense and so obscure that history hardly finds here and there

a thread of light running through them, we yet travel back all that way to find this example of simple-hearted, practical and courageous trust in God, overtopping and outshining most of the specimens of Christian faithfulness that we meet in the best modern society. The plain Patriarch's experience illustrates, sixty generations beforehand, the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes better than thousands among our self-confident, calculating and over-anxious nominal Christians. We can see how even an Apostle of Christ, preaching nothing but justification by the faith of the cross, should point back to Chaldea, before the law was given by Moses, and say to Christendom, "Why can you not learn the secret of holy living and its blessedness at least from that venerable saint standing there with the light and freshness of the world's morning on his forehead?" Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. You ask how do we know that he believed? Well, when God called him to break the ties that bound him to his native country and make himself an adventuring explorer, without so much as stopping to ask whither he was going or why he should go he simply arose and went. When God told him, in that mysterious midnight interview, that, childless as he then was, so old that the gift would be nothing less than a miracle, there should be born to him a son who should be a type and an ancestor of the future Messiah, and that in Him and His salvation all the nations of the earth should be blessed, no stupid rationalism in him rose up to doubt the glorious word. When God suddenly required him to take that dearly-loved boy around whose fair head such marvellous hopes had already begun to cluster, and make him ready for a sacrifice, the good man lifted up the burden of this awful sorrow, went to the mount, laid the wood in order, built

the altar, and then answered to the child's unsuspecting question, "Where is the victim?" "God, my son, will prepare Himself a burnt-offering," and all this as firmly and calmly as he would have given one of his lambs to the shearer. So, in the eternal purpose of the Spirit, the complete succession of Scriptural events is one plan; the Revelation of Christ, the crucified Redeemer and everlasting Life, is the centre and heart of the entire body of the Bible making it one organized whole. And so even in believing Abraham we behold the victory which overcometh the world, even a Christlike faith.

What we have now to do with him, however, and what the Apostle wants us to do with him when he goes back to Chaldea and brings him into the New Testament, is something more than to look at him across this wide field of time and admire him, or to write and hear sermons about him. Like the other grand characters that are called up, one after another, in the same magnificent eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, he is there to make more vividly real to us this truth—that the one first and supreme thing, the one right and true and noble and blessed thing for every soul among us to do is to listen to our Lord and to follow Him in a Christian consecration,—let Him lead where He may, let it cost what it will, let whatever plausible reasons or flattering prospects to the contrary rise up in the path to turn us aside.

I suppose one chief hindrance to its having this effect on most of us will be the difficulty of our realizing that, with respect to each one of us, in our personal insignificance, God just as truly has a plan, a design and a particular place, both of work and of communion, as He had for Abraham or Moses, for Enoch or Samuel, for St. John or St. Paul, for any hero or any saint.

But He has. Ours may not be so high a place or so much honored with usefulness as theirs. We have no concern with that; but the whole tenor of our Christian religion tells us our place is there; that when He created us God shaped and designed each one, in every station of society, of either sex, in all kinds of employment, for a particular service in His Church, in His family on earth, and in His heaven forever. He has been training us and fashioning us, all along, from our birth up, in our commonplace circumstances, for just that particular service which no one else of all the millions hitherto made could perform. He has sent health or pain, He has given relations and helpers, children or friends, or taken them away, He has opened doors or shut them, He has sent us here or sent us there, He has caressed us or scourged us, He has heard our prayers by granting us what we asked for or heard them just as much to grant us something better than we asked for,—all this down to the smallest particular, that He might make out of each one a loving son or daughter meet for some special use in the Master's house. God has not scattered us over the planet like the carved blocks of the machine, each one a *fac simile* of the rest, and our destiny an accident. No one heart in this congregation was set beating to go on beating forever for itself, to wear out without the love and joy of salvation, to ache with unhealed agony, to be lost sight of by the Father, to be kept out of the fold by the Shepherd. No man liveth to himself, or dieth to himself, but each unto God, says St. Paul, unto God who would not that any should perish but that all should come unto Him. You may forfeit it by not believing in it, and by trying to live and die for yourself; God may hereafter fill up the vacancy and finish the full harmony of His heavenly multitude by the river of Life without you. But

in the millions and millions of wayward and worthless lives entangled with each other He will never for one instant lose sight of the thread of yours. He formed you with a loving intention, and all His affection and mercy to the rest have not diminished a particle His affection and mercy for you. The Saviour would have endured all His humiliations and sufferings as readily for the meanest or the maddest heart that insults Him by pride or sensuality as for the whole Race. Every one of us is called of God to go and do His will, to believe and serve the Master, to occupy a post in the Christian family and a seat at the Christian feast, as much as any Patriarch or Evangelist. This is our responsibility, and it is the impartiality of the Gospel.

Next observe the large meaning of one small word,—the word "out." This faithful man, the father of all the faithful, was "called to go out" and he "went out." We are to draw from that a new inference,—viz., that, in his call and journeying one place did not look to him just like another, equally familiar, attractive and desirable. On the contrary, between the past and the future there was a contrast. What he must leave behind is familiar; what he must turn towards is strange. What he must leave behind is known, tried and safe and agreeable: what he must encounter is troublesome and hazardous. Going *out* implies a giving up of something like a home, with the warm, bright, sheltering, endearing attributes always associated with that beloved name. Within are security and comfort: without are exposure, peril, sacrifice. Here, then, is a new rule for the Christian life. Where that life is regenerate and true, what a Christian life ought to be, fulfilling the Gospel idea, it does not merely run on from one scene to another on the same level, nor does it consist in merely moving

about through the routine of an easy experience without progress, without trying new difficulties, gaining greater heights, or by fresh sacrifices coming into a closer and more spiritual sympathy with Christ. If you study it, whether in yourself or another, you will be apt to find that, however ordinary or humble its outward condition, yet inwardly there is a steady going on from one grace to another, from strength to strength, from glory to glory, in conquering temptations, bringing under the body, crushing besetting sins, getting into a less flighty, less worldly, less irritable, or less self-occupied frame. Should you, on looking round among your acquaintances or into biographies, find cases opposite to this, where the Christian after his confirmation seemed to be quite stationary from year to year, you would say that did not comport with the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus: there must be some radical defect: and what is true of others must be true of yourself. But now as all these advances in holiness involve self-denial and sacrifice it requires faith to make them. We should not undertake such changes and go out from the old, safe easy-chair and fire-side comfort, of ourselves, across deserts and over mountains. Even the humiliations and slavery to self that ought to mortify us become preferable, with sluggish and faithless minds, to the bodily hunger and hardships of a pilgrimage into the wilderness, and we say with the enslaved Israelites, our blood too servile to kindle even at the call of emancipation, "No, let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians." And hence, because we are slow to start ourselves, see how God's providence is constantly stirring us and, by exposing us to new hardships, gives us opportunities for new virtues and graces. He leads us "out";—out of a protected child-

hood into a tempted youth and hard-working manhood; out of a set of favoring and delightful associations into a bleak neighborhood and rough surroundings; out of health into sickness; out of a mean self-satisfaction into a painful penitence; out of mirth into mortification; out of happiness into disappointment; out of dangerous comfort into safe suffering, courage, and energy; out of things we desired and liked perhaps, into work that is not welcome, among people that are not lovely, into years of endurance where every day is like a year, desolated by the death of some warm heart or the cruelty of a cold one. But all the while He is leading us out of the world into heaven. So the Christian's way, if it is a growing and enlarging life, is just like Abraham's solemn march from Haran to Mt. Moriah. Every step needs faith in God, faith in the better country to come, faith in the end to be reached,—or else he would look back and perhaps sink down in the road.

Take in, then, with this another strong element in the doctrine of the text,—the superiority, in this going forward of the disciple after his Lord, of faith over knowledge. We *knew* the low country we left, by eyesight, by the senses, or the intellect; but what lay before was always unknown, invisible, a land of promise, only believed in. In all our approaches to God, in making up our minds to come out on Christ's side in an open confession, in Baptism in maturer years, in coming to be confirmed, in every victory over the evils of the world, we can not depend merely on the understanding. "He went out, *not knowing* whither he went." That was the crown and the glory of his obedience. He did know who called him, and in whom he believed, and that was enough. Curiosity had no questions to ask and no excuses to offer beyond that. We should only make

ourselves miserable if we insisted on knowing the future, for we are not competent to understand it till we come to it; the present day is always God's school to educate and prepare us for to-morrow. Are we with Christ to-day? If we look back and think only of the pleasant things we have left behind we shall be homesick exiles on our way to banishment, we shall be Israel dragged sore-hearted to Babylon, and, as Christ declares, not fit for the Kingdom. We could not enter into rest, as the complaining generation of Israel could not enter into Canaan, because of unbelief. But if you think only, day by day, of Him who goes before and calls you on, only of a duty to be cheerfully done for His sake, only of the work that will honor Him and the good you can do to the brother-souls around you for which He died, then the labors of the way are lightened by His Heavenly hand, and, before you are aware, Heaven has come down to meet you where you live, and your feet stand already in a Promised Land.

It might seem, at first sight, in reading this passage, as if the principal stress were laid on the obedience. And then some of you, who are more advanced in the higher privileges of the Gospel, and accustomed to discriminate in spiritual matters, might say, No; obedience is a low and elementary stage; obedience is of the law; we are not under the law but under grace; we are not Jews; Christ has come, and it is the faith and love which go out to Him for what He is in the beauty of His holiness, and what He has done for us in the atonement of the Cross, that constitute the special advantage of our position in the Christian Church.

Nothing can be more true than this. The whole object of this sublime eleventh chapter to the Hebrews is to celebrate not the bare keeping of commandments but

faith in the Invisible, and the glory of acting freely with reference to the absolute God rather than present profits, or any outward reward. Hence it runs all through the passage that there are two kinds of obedience, not distinguished from each other by the outward appearance of the obedient action,—for this may be precisely the same in the two cases,—but by the motive which prompts the obedience, or the feeling that impels us to act as we do. Two different kinds of character are produced by these two sorts of obedience. One is the obedience of calculation; the other is the obedience of faith. One is the obedience of Simon the Pharisee, keeping the law scrupulously, sneering at the Saviour's mercy and at the penitent woman kissing His feet; the other is the obedience of the penitent herself, forgiven all her *dis*obedience because she loves much, saved by her faith yet ready to do ten thousand times more obedient services to Jesus than any punctilious Pharisee of them all in the whole Sanhedrim.

It would be easy to apply the same distinction to the motives that influence all the conversions and reformations of Christian character; the breaking up of a doubtful intimacy or companionship by a young person; the relinquishment of a habit that tends to dissipation, of vanity or looseness of speech; the renouncing of any kind of amusement which, either in its origin or consequences, is related to ungodliness or immorality. Calculations of what you are to gain by a reformation may be better than to continue in the bad practice; but it is only when you begin to act on the obedience of faith, hating sin because God hates it and Christ died to deliver us from it, loving and doing right when it is most costly because you have enough in having the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in an everlasting heaven

of purity and love, only then that you enter into the fellowship of saints or have the mind of Christ.

The inquiry honestly arises, in connection with the decisive step of making an open confession of Christ in His Church, "Suppose I do that, and with the best intentions; still, my old life may return upon me; strong impulses, wrong habits, worldly inclinations, an ungoverned tongue, my unprincipled companions, the passion for gain or pleasure, may reassert their power in spite of my best designs; and then I shall only dishonor my profession and wound my Holy Redeemer in the House of His friends. How do I know how I shall hold out? And till I do know, had I not better wait?" Well, I search the whole teaching of Christ and His apostles on that point, and I find only one direction. Take the ground of the obedience of faith, and take it at once. Go out on the line of your clearly-commanded duty, as an act of loyal and loving service to your Lord, not knowing, not calculating, not fearing the results of your obedience. "Do this in remembrance of Me." "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." "No man shall pluck them out of My hand." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." These are plain commandments, and plain promises. There are more just like them. No exceptions are mentioned, no limitations are set. Why not throw yourselves in simple faith on the calling of God, drop your groping calculations, and go forward? There will be faults remaining in you, very likely, but they will be no more unmanageable because you take the surest way to root them out and break them up; and they will not be unpardonable if you repent of them and plead the great sacrifice, which you

now have a full right to plead. No doubt there were occasions in the Patriarch's life where, inconsistent with his general and deliberate obedience to God, he did the wrong thing, swerved from the high course, and lost for a time, under sudden temptation, the clear conscience. But the great choices of his life were fixed and determined by his faith. When he was most himself he was godly. When he had time to right himself he stood on the rock of the old sure trust, and every power and faculty in him came up straight and ready to do God's will. It was in these calm and decisive hours, such as really, some time or other, settle the direction and fix the character of every man who has a character at all and does not merely float on the stream or veer and sway with the breeze, that he laid hold on eternal life. Leaning on his staff at his tent-door, in the still starlight of those Eastern nights,—hours when the angels of God find the heart of man most open,—with his children and flocks lying asleep and all depending on his fatherly hand, and ready to go where it should lead them,—east or west, north or south,—alone there with God he thought the great problem out. Where should he lead them,—north or south, or east or west, when the morning should break over the Mesopotamian hills? Should he go where he pleased? Or had the Greater King and Better Father above those stars a plan for him? That question was settled forever. God called Abraham: "Go dwell in Canaan." Must he have no will of his own? None separate from God's. Sweeter pastures for the herds may seem to stretch on the slopes southwards. The way eastward may look smoother. More friends and fewer enemies may point him northward. There is a simple consideration before all these: "Where does God call me to go?" That being settled, every thing is set-

tled. Now God comes down from those deep heavens and dwells in his humble and contrite heart. He goes in and out and finds pasture. He hides in the pavilion. He enters into that sure and blessed covenant, including the promised Christ to come, which is to the believing Patriarch just what the covenant of the Church's communion of the Supper is to each believer here now.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He prepareth a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." And as the angel of the Lord called out of heaven the second time, so the angel of his later and better covenant will say to you, "By Myself have I sworn, because thou hast done this thing, in blessing I will bless thee, because thou hast obeyed My voice."

As we said, then, at the beginning, that this obedience of faith would simplify and purify our common life, so we may say now, at the end, in the light of this Bible exposition, pointing us to the consecration and sacrament of the Cross, that it would glorify that life. You may calculate, and call it unsafe to advance and adventure on the securities of an invisible inheritance. But, dear friends, living and dying as you and I are, nothing is so unsafe for us as disobedience to God. Nothing is so unsafe as to stay back and make excuse when God calls us to go forward. Nothing can be so safe or so good as to take Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, at His own plain word, giving up our doubts at His kind and unchangeable command. This is a present salvation, a present power and peace, a present heaven. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.

TWO FORCES, CONSTRUCTION AND CONTENTION.

Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

"They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded, ... from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared."—*Nehemiah* iv. 17, 18, 21.

These Hebrews were repairing their national capital. The captivity is over. By permission of the Persian monarch, Artaxerxes, and under the command of their two great leaders, Nehemiah and Ezra, the exiled tribes march back to their desolated ancestral home. The movement is one of the most signal in all history. It means nothing less than the reconstruction of the Jewish theocracy, with its two strong pillars,—patriotism and religion. Of course Jerusalem must be rebuilt, the temple reopened. Ezra takes in charge the political renovation; Nehemiah the ecclesiastical. The latter had heard, in the Persian palace, how the city walls were broken down, the gates burnt with fire, and the fathers' sepulchres laid waste. His countrymen, patriotic and devout, join him in the stirring watchword, "Let us arise and build; the God of heaven will prosper us." To every man and every detachment, in churchly order, a separate part of the work is allotted and for a while all goes forward prosperously. Suddenly certain jealous neighbors, Sanballat, a Samaritan, and Tobiah the Ammonite,

with sundry Arabians and Ashdodites are seen skulking among the hills. They must be watched; and so the army of laborers is turned at the same time into an army of militia—minute men. They are obliged, under Nehemiah's generalship, to work with the right hand and take care of the enemy with the left. They illustrate by their very attitude, half industrial and half military, two principles,—*construction*, on one hand, and *contention* on the other.

Each of us is put into the world to be a builder, and himself is the building. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" Not only the collective body of believers, the whole Church, but each separate disciple is a "habitation of God, through the Spirit." If your faith, your work, your prayers, your watchfulness, shall ever succeed in edifying you into any thing like a completed Christian, your character will be an edifice where God's glory will be more distinctly manifest than it is over any altar,—where His praise will resound more acceptably than from the grandest organ, and where His truth is more effectually preached than from the most eloquent pulpit of any cathedral in the world; and that not one day of the seven but all the days.

We touch two or three points, to meet misunderstandings.

Because character is a building, it is not therefore to be understood that there is no need in the Christian life for an instant change, or conversion. That comes before the building can be begun to any purpose or on any right plan. The exiles coming home have a ruin on hand to start with. The ground must be cleared of weeds and rubbish before the mason can lay one stone of a safe foundation. If your heart has been overgrown by a wild growth of lawless habits they must be rooted out.

If some disgusting sensual appetite has been burning in the core of your life so that now, when you look in to examine yourself, you see only a blackened pile, those smoky cinders must be cast out. In other words, repentance must have come first and purged the place. The prodigal's indulgence and sin must have been renounced. God's eternal command, "Get you a new heart and a new spirit," must have been obeyed. The old man must have been put off before the new man, sincere and just and holy, can be put on. St. Paul himself, with his thorough insight, takes care for this necessity, as the Master had before him. If any man should try to build on a false foundation his work would come to naught. No outside clamps would hold it up. All must be sound at the base. So that if any one should suspect that our doctrine,—that Christian character is a building, and man the builder,—overlooks the necessity of a renewal of the heart he is corrected. It abides by Christ's own word, "Except ye be converted ye can not enter into the kingdom of heaven." In this very case mentioned in the text, it is expressly stated that there was much to be removed,—fragments of the old wall, cinders of the burnt gates,—so much in fact that when Nehemiah first arrived to reconnoitre the region there was no place for the horse he rode to pass through.

Again, we must not take the impression that the formation of Christian character consists in putting pieces of moral propriety together,—here an amiable trait and there an honest one,—a patchwork of merits, without any grand, all-controlling, divine principle. No architecture that deserves the name proceeds after that accidental and impulsive fashion. The Hebrews did not build Jerusalem so. There must be one "design,"—an organizing purpose held clearly

in the builder's mind, running through every part from least to greatest, binding all together and subduing the whole to serve the uniformity of the plan. In the structure of character this organizing principle is the inworking life of Christ. It is the will of God. You may doubtless do a great many good things, handsome actions; you may speak kind words, pay just debts, and give out of a natural sympathy to the poor, without this internal and supreme principle of love to God kept alive by faith in His Son. But you are not a true builder of character then. Your materials are heterogeneous. Your implements are weak. Your work is unsteady and untrustworthy. The Christian *motive* is wanting. It has never been promised that we shall succeed in forming a right character without a thorough consecration at the outset, any more than it has been promised to the architect that he shall raise a firm wall if he ignores proportion and equilibrium. The spiritual laws are just as necessary, in order to success in a righteous life, as the mechanical laws in order to architectural success. The first of those laws is that God is the centre and object of all religious affections; the second that Jesus is the way to the Father. Accordingly, entire submission to the Heavenly Will is the inmost necessity of a Christian character. It is called self-renunciation; it is called yielding the heart. And hence the apostle's reply to us when we ask how we shall build character fair and strong,—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

If I undertake to be a Christian man, then, by leaving my virtue to the accident of a mood, letting circumstances guide me,—holding before my eyes no clear and fixed law of God, and careful to walk in no Saviour's steps with my hand laid trustingly in His,—why then I shall be like one who thinks to build without a plan.

When the fire or the flood tries every man's work of what sort it is, the work will not stand. Life may seem to go on tolerably in fair weather, but when the storm tests the timbers the whole sinks into dismal confusion. Into every particle of life must run this law of growth, this secret power of the Holy Christ,—like the builder's invisible design spreading through all the beams and braces and apartments of the house;—or else it will be no "habitation of the Spirit."

"They which builded on the wall,—every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon." The growth of character, that is, depends on two kinds of force,—one the acquiring of good, the other the repulse of evil; one the increase of holiness, the other a battle with sin. Such is the state of things that surrounds us; such the power, pressure and mischief of the enemy. No workman leaving either of them out can reach the stature of the perfect man. *Here* is righteousness to be gained; *there* is temptation to be conquered. A true life demands every day the instrument of service and the instrument of warfare. Look at each a moment separately.

One duty of the Christian life is positive. Christian character is a positive substance. That substance is a righteous will, a purpose consecrated to God, and acting in all well-doing for man,—for family, neighbors, the disabled, the sinful, the oppressed, the whole Brotherhood. It will act commonly through ordinary channels, business, household, society, the Church. The more prompt and efficient this righteous will in a man is to exert itself the larger the measure of character. That increase may be of two kinds,—in the intensity with which it acts, or in the circle over which its activity extends. You may grow in character by doing, thinking,

and feeling *more vigorously* for God and your brother-man within a certain fixed sphere, or by *extending* your good influence and effort, so as to bring them into contact with a greater number of persons; or you *may* do both. One or the other you must do, or be a sluggard, unfit to live at all, and certainly not fit to live in the Master's Family.

It is plain, then, what construction is. I do not say it is always the multiplying of outward religious performances; for it may go forward on a sick bed. Strictly speaking it is the multiplying of that inward spiritual energy out of which, in all ordinary circumstances, right outward deeds will be sure to come. It is replenishing the stock of life in the heart. It is making conscience quick, watchful, unbending. It is cultivating loyalty to the voice of God in the soul, in spite of all the counsels of selfish expediency or worldly policy. It is the increase of humility, sincerity, temperance, integrity, patience, sweetness of temper, submission, benevolence. Additions to these, by whatever means, by Bible and prayer and sacrament and labor, by the study of them in the lives of heroic saints, are the positive building up of character. "With one hand, each wrought in the work." And the work went on, "from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared."

But, another kind of force in a Christian life is Resistance. This righteous will encounters adversaries. It must be tried by opposition. Its sincerity and strength are put to the proof by conflicts. In that positive process of achieving goodness, hindrances are met. It has been said, "There is nothing real or useful that is not a seat of war." And character has been defined, by the same proverbialist, as "the impossibility of being displaced, or overset." For every virtue this blighted Eden

shows a vice; for every nobleness a meanness; for every prayer a profanity; for every self-sacrifice a self-indulgence. So temptation has to be fought. If there is a state of holy friendship with our Lord, to be sought, so there is a state of indifference, or alienation, to be struggled out of and kept under. If there is love to be replenished, there is hate to be quenched. If there are humility, sincerity, temperance, integrity, patience, sweetness of temper, submission, benevolence, to be put on, so are there vanity, lust, censoriousness, duplicity, obstinacy, avarice, to be put off and trampled down. Thus, at every point, there is fighting. Here are Sanballat and his Samaritan army, hovering in ambush, ready to rush upon us and take us captive again while we complacently rear our inner temple. And hence there must always be a "sword" girded by every man's side, and while he works with one of his hands the "other hand" must "hold a weapon."

Take construction without resistance. Suppose I try to ignore, as one kind of philosophy does, the patent fact of *sin*,—to forget the temptations and simply to go on cultivating good, as if there were no opposite; presently I shall find these sins are making assaults on me from behind. So I might gain something in benevolence, or at least enlarge the amount of my almsgiving, but others might discover, if I should not, that meantime vanity had crept upon me, and I should present the unhandsome spectacle of a conceited and irreverent philanthropist, or a dishonest devotee. Or while I was abounding in Church zeal I might be mortifying my brethren with the infection of an ugly temper in my house. My work would be undermined, the pious pains would be spoilt; I should be no true builder; the Ammonites and Ashdodites would be upon me while my

face was turned the other way; and all because, while I wrought with one hand, I did not hold a weapon in the other. Or, on the other hand, take resistance without construction. You have half a character, a broken force, as before—only of a different kind. Now, instead of the soft and unmasculine type of piety just pointed out, so easily ambushed and betrayed, there will be a hard, censorious, belligerent type; all siege and campaign. The sword will crowd out the gentle arts of peace. Forms of theology have grown up under the influence of that onesidedness; they are harsh, bitter and unlovely, and fail to lay hold on broad, deep sympathies, and so fail of their object. The effect on the personal life is irritating. It makes soldiers against Satan, but not tillers of the soil of God. The kinder, more spiritual, more devotional traits are wanting, being lost in the military. We become less anxious to follow Jesus and bless mankind than to fail and vanquish some adversary. We become clever disputants, expert in polemics, but not good, trusting, patient, loving, holy men and women. Looking out so sharply for the Ammonites and Ashdodites, the walls do not go up. We are no more effectual builders than before. We have not wrought at the work with either hand, but have grasped and brandished weapons of war with both.

Go where we will, in history or common life, the necessity for this twofold office of righteous energies is before us. We want the watchful eye against the adversary of the old contemplative anchorite, without his austerity. We want the practical activity of the modern reformer, without his blindness to the personal foes in his own heart. All our lives long the woe or the joy of this double burden is laid upon you, and upon me. The mechanic or trader goes among his business ac-

quaintances, and the tempting opportunities of a deception which brings no open disgrace teach him that if he means to be a brave and unsullied soul, with a heart that he can open to the eye of God, he must resist while he works or bargains. The scholar is cast into the less noisy competitions and rivalries of his class, or upon the silent insinuations of his own weak heart, or the perilous solicitations of an artificial society, and every hour admonishes him that he has enemies to overcome as well as graces to acquire. The young man steps from his sheltered home into the loud street, or passes the gates of profligacy, and all that he hears with his ears and sees with both his eyes cries to him that he needs a warrior's sword girded to him, as well as the pilgrim's scrip and staff. One hand for service, one for battle, the Lord's battle. When this is understood Christ's Church will be filled with consistent believers and fearless soldiers. One hand to build for God; the other to smite down and discrown mammon.

Almost a thousand years after this rebuilding of Jerusalem, as the traditions of both the Greek and Latin Churches teach, a Persian monarch plundered it again, and brought back to his country the holy cross of the Christians. The constant sight of it moved the heart of a certain sage and soldier among the troops and converted him. He serves as an excellent example of our doctrine. For while he achieved a positive holiness that has kept his name fragrant so long, he resisted, through seven years of sharp self-discipline, the most seductive and violent propensities to return to the Pagan magic and superstitions taught him by his learned father. The terrible cruelties that persecution inflicted on him he provoked by boldly rebuking certain heathenish abominations, in the streets of Cæsarea. Marzabanes, the

governor, first offered him great preferments, and then threatened him with crucifixion, but without shaking his allegiance. They made him carry stones with a heavy chain binding his neck to his foot; but he only repeated, "I am a Christian." They scourged him with a knotty club; but he laid himself down and received the blows without moving. They told him he might be an officer at court if he would disown Christ with his lips, though he should cling to Him in his heart,—and that there could be no harm in that. The honest soul thought otherwise, and refused to deny his Master with a lie. He was afraid the applause of his brethren, who crowded to the prison to kiss his feet, would hurt his simplicity, and begged their prayers. Three days he was unmercifully beaten; the flesh was crushed to the bone by a beam; but he was tranquil and replied, "I am not to be moved." The hand, a hand with which he could no longer work or hold a weapon, he was hung up by, for hours, and in that strange way it bore its witness. When he was strangled, at last, he thanked God for so easy a death. Here was a builder not for himself only but for after ages,—a builder by a heavenly design, a builder by faith in the Master. No wonder that at his Christian baptism his Persian name was changed to *Anastasius*, *i. e.*, the resurrection man, for he was already risen from death to a new and spiritual life.

My friends, we are not martyrs; but we may be faithful and unyielding as if we were, provided only we keep the spirit and twofold power of the old fidelity. "They which builded on the wall, and they that bore burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded."

RIGHT BEGINNINGS; OR, NO "PROGRESS."

Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

"BETWEEN Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon, . . . Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you to-day. . . . And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."—*Exod.* xiv. 2, 13, 15.

BETWEEN the two orders given—both found in this morning's second lesson—there is certainly the appearance of a contradiction. To this emigrating host, a nation of slaves turned into an army of fugitives, pursued and perplexed, their leader says, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. He shall fight for you."

Presently, after how long an interval we are not told, but it must have been short, the Lord Himself says, "Go forward." It looks as if the prophet of God were discredited by the God of the prophet: and as if the second command not only superseded and abrogated but rebuked the first.

But if we look attentively I think we shall find in this bit of old Hebrew history, flashing out of that clouded moment when the fate of a crushed and half-liberated people hung in peril, a principle of spiritual life for our own use here; twofold indeed, but all the more comprehensive, and entirely consistent with itself.

The occasion was extraordinary. Even in a campaign thick-set with dangers from first to last, that night on

the shore was singularly critical. One wrong word from the commander's mouth would give back the whole delivered nation to the disciplined and royal troops coming up close behind, to an enraged tyrant, to a bondage ten times as terrible as before. It is not too much to say that the course of the world, on three continents, for all aftertime, would have been changed.

You say, perhaps, this local singularity separates the occurrence at once from our modern life, and removes it altogether to the far-off region of Biblical history.

On the contrary, I believe we shall find that this ancient and oriental record touches every one of us directly at precisely this point. All of us come, at one time or another, to turning-points between captivity and freedom: and these turning-points are apt to determine the whole course of our lives. We are told that the important part of human life is the ordinary; that little things make up character; that duty is a common-place business, and that Christianity is an every-day religion:—which is all true. It is half a truth. It is true as against a religion of fits and starts, of holiday costumes and ceremonial fancies, a religion of intermittent agitations or intellectual abstractions. These are illusions that reappear in every generation and on every soil. And yet every true and strong life has its sharp transitions, its critical choice, its decisive moment between Migdol and the sea. It owes to them commonly its grander energies and its noblest conquests. They are not always seen by other men, not coming by observation, and so are like the kingdom of heaven, which comes with them if they are rightly met, or is thrown away with them when they are lost. It is true enough, most of our time we move on in a path no way remarkable, or in a routine with nothing signal or memorable about it. Day takes after

day, and the scene, the occupation, the company, helps and hindrances, are much the same from month to month. But look longer, and you find that, however the wheels of habit may run on in a kind of groove, with few startling outside changes, yet somewhere there was a spot where this regular drift got its start and its new direction. You stood alone somewhere, at a parting of two ways, and you chose:—and then, as the consequence of that choice, your life went thenceforth in a particular channel, pure or filthy, straight or crooked, Heavenward or Hellward, long after. And there is nothing exceptional about this. The same law governs national concerns, processes in nature, and mechanics. War, for instance, is well-nigh the staple of history; and yet historians count but fifteen decisive battles of the world:—all other vast movements of ages and empires winding like a whirlpool around these bloody centres. So in mechanics. Only now and then, on its turn-table, the engine is set in its new direction; but all it does, or draws, afterwards, proceeds from that momentary pivotal determination. The grain grows day and night all summer till harvest; but there is a single time of planting. The Patriarch lodged only one night at Bethel; but then, afterward, all his journeyings over the Eastern lands were at the bidding of his God. How did you come to be the man you are to-day? There was most likely some hour of choice. Two forms of apparent good lay before you. Two voices spoke. Among all the common questions that rise this one question rose. It was the question of your soul's eternity. Very likely it had relation too to some other soul besides your own,—your affection, your duty, to him or her. Perhaps it was in the line of your common doing, only an emergency of larger and uncommon concern. How did you act? Did you say yes, or no?

Did you go, or stay? Did you accept the partnership, the companionship, the offer,—or refuse? The question is not one of expediency, or taste, or convenience, or profit. It has to do with your soul's life, honor, uprightness, salvation. Such periods can be recalled in memory, I think, by most persons; but never recalled in fact. The rest of life depends on them, and on the way we meet them. We are between Migdol and the sea. Egypt and Pharaoh,—an old, bad life and its despotism of darkness,—are behind: the other way the road runs where God will. With Israel it was well that it ran to the baptism in the cloud and in the sea.

We have only to enlarge the reach of such a decision, carrying it through the roots and springs of character, to find in it *that one all-including, all-controlling choice* which turns a bad man into a good one, or creates a living Christian. Indeed it is of that one radical *renewing* that the exodus of Israel has always been regarded as the type. Every large religious body has its strong features, its elements of power, or else it never would have become large. This Church has several of these, because it took its pattern from the Bible and its constitution from Christ. We have always laid great stress, as you know, on the gradual growth and steady training of Christian character,—from infancy upwards, from baptism to the last eucharist. This implies a constant employment of means, or instruments of nurture. Christians are brought up, day by day, into the stature of Christ. This is strong doctrine; it will bear your whole weight, all the way, from end to end. It is strong in Scripture; strong in primitive practice; strong in common-sense; and strong tried by its fruit. But it is not strong enough to carry the whole system of the Christian religion alone, without another related truth which God has set

into harmony with it, to fill it out, and to balance its weight. That is a doctrine of conversion. This Christian life has very commonly a definite and special beginning, and perhaps a re-beginning, distinctly marked, not the same with the baptismal beginning, or regeneration, but often coming after that as one of its effects. This doctrine too is strong in Scripture; strong in primitive practice; strong in common-sense; and strong tried by its fruit. There is no *going on* without a beginning; and no *safe* going on without a standing still first to see the salvation of God. Lay emphasis, then, with all your might on the divine work of the Spirit in a new and changed heart. There is a *time* for it. Moving the wrong way, with faces away from God, as ten thousand souls around us are moving, no going forward can ever bring the wanderer to Christ or to Heaven. He must turn, or he is lost. We want a type of Christian piety definitely marked, with a decisive outset and a clear stamp. We need Church missions, a pulpit, an evangelism, which will call men out of darkness into light, and say, with an intense and awful earnestness, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" On every side I think I see men and women whose inner life has no bond, of love or faith or consecrated purpose whatever, to the life and Cross of Jesus Christ. Of what use to go to them with a preaching of progress, of education, of doing a little better, till there is some real good to be bettered? Heaven forbid that I should tell any man, in the name of God, to "go on," till I know whether he is going towards God or from Him! First of all that wandering soul in the wilderness must stop; stand still; believe; and "see the salvation of God."

Because, no matter where the Christian man's service may lie, it is a special service, and it requires a special

character: it is a way through the world *distinct from the world's way;* and hence it must be entered on not as the little details of daily duty are, with a slight and half-unconscious exercise of the willing power, but with a gathering up of all the moral forces within, which stirs and strains and taxes the entire soul. A voice speaks directly down into the midst of these familiar occupations and social companies of men, and says to them, not collectively, as I speak here to you in the congregation, but to this man and that man, one by one, "Come out; you must go spiritually into a new place, and breathe a different air, and move by another impulse. There must be the beginning and the growth in you of a life so unlike the old one, *i. e.*, so evidently drawn out of the life of the Son of God and quickened by Him, that men will see and know at once that you have been "with Jesus;" not apprenticed to a certain trade, or trained to a certain calling, or skilled in a certain art, or educated at a certain college, or graduated into a certain profession, but that your whole inmost strength feeds consciously with a relish on your Lord, in His Church, and so takes a tone and style and mark altogether its own. We must face this exacting condition, if we mean to be Christians at all. An easy-going Christianity, which takes the Gospel only on its attractive and ornamental side, a fashion of living that never cuts off a pleasure because it is selfish, or declines an opportunity for gain because it is of doubtful honesty, never tightens the rein, or curbs the tongue, or feels a cross, but, while talking the dialect of religion, gives no other sign to distinguish it from a well-bred and cultured heathenism, will undoubtedly do to lengthen the roll of membership in the Parish Register; but it will not bear the question, "Who is on the Lord's side?" in the day of battle; it will not make

ours *the Church* of this or any other land; it will not deliver the soul of priest or parishioner. Money must be got, by you men, not for itself or to be kept or counted, but for Christian uses. There must be no meanness in getting it, no lying, no fraud, no greediness, no taking without giving. Houses must be kept, by you women, not for luxury or ostentation, or to outdo other houses in the neighborhood, or as animals' stalls to eat and drink and sleep in, but as the nurseries of magnanimity and purity, as retreats from the wearing care and mad fashions of a self-seeking society, as a training-ground for out-door charities and as oratories for prayer. Nor is this all. With home and work there is a Church. Faith must have its own sphere and operation, unseen but real: a kingdom of heaven opening down and out into the world. With the heart men must believe unto righteousness; with the mouth, and on the knees, the Faith must be confessed. And what I have now to say of all this newness of life is that it does not creep or percolate into character of itself, without a positive, personal, special decision, when the whole man sees two roads open and chooses between them;—sees two masters, and takes the one for his love, hating the other; —sees two ends of human life. Who will say, then, that this doctrine of the extraordinary emergencies of our spiritual experience, with the example in the text, is not practical?

We come now to the two orders. The heart has waked; life is quickened. In intense earnestness, the man asks what he shall do. Is he met with a puzzle and a contradiction? If a prophet says, "Stand still and see the salvation wrought by God," and if God Himself says, "Go forward," is the one command a mistake, to be discarded for the other? Are there two religions here,—a true

and a false,—one an indolent superstition, the other a manly righteousness?

Instead of that, interpreting them by the whole Revelation, both are voices of one consistent Spirit, and make a single message. Each is true *by the side of the other;* and neither the first nor the last could be true alone. Both times it is God that speaks to you and to me.

"Moses said unto the people, Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He shall show you to-day. The Lord shall fight for you." Is that evasion? Is it sluggishness? Is it procrastination or superstition? If it is, then faith in a living power above ourselves, infinitely wiser than we are and infinitely stronger, is not the best and deepest thing in a Christian heart: then all the creeds and teaching of the Church from Pentecost are mistaken. No: the first thing this proud and sinful soul of mine needs is to be emptied of self and become like a little child. Action by and by. Work when you are ready and fit for work. March when you have been told where to go, and can see your way:—not before. First of all, if we would do any thing good or great we must get into a right attitude with God from whom all goodness and greatness come. First of all get you to the Fountain-Head, and see that the channels are open for real streams of light and life to flow down from the unseen and supernatural Heart into your own. Make sure that there is a God, and that He is *your* God; and that, being yours, His course is your course and His fight is your fight. It is not the atheist that is told to go forward; for his very going will be godless and he will blunder into Egypt again. The farther he goes the worse. It is not the pantheist that is bidden to go forward; for no fatherly hand will lead him but a blind force, the blind leading the blind. It is not the arrogant

and unreligious moralist; for he will have to build his system out of the same materials that have failed him so often, or else trust the poor instinct which has already cast him helpless between the wilderness and the sea. When Christ and the apostles were asked, "What shall I do to be a Christian?" the answer was always in the same order:—it was a pointing upward, first, not forward: Believe; lay hold on Heaven; take the Hand of Christ; see that spiritual things are real; make your first act one of devotion; repent; be baptized; be confirmed; pray. Fill your mind and will with power from on high.

Now comes another order. The man of faith moves to his work. "Wherefore criest thou" with nothing but a cry,—now when the hour for arising and marching has arrived? "Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward." The supernatural sign has been given. The road to the Better Land lies open: light from Heaven falls on it. Your part is next. A Christian life springs always from faith,—but it springs out into the natural world, the common field, the daily sacrifice, the ordinary business, the familiar house. Faith goes, obediently, to its work, and does it, without complaining. The faith that works, and the work that prays,—these are the full and twofold way of the Gospel of Him who is Son of God and Son of Man. They were preached by the banks of the Jordan and in the streets of Jerusalem and on the hills of Galilee. They were preached before, by the same Christ, through Moses' lips, at Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, and they have got to be followed here still before this land is a garden of righteousness, before men and nations on earth are brothers, saying together, "Our Father who art in heaven."

One thing, meantime, my friends, we shall all have to remember. As the faith which prays must be a real faith, so the energy that goes forward into action must be a brave energy. See the invisible country with Moses,—glory in the cross with St. Paul. The way the road runs we do not know, any better than Israel did:—and whether sands or seas are in it. Being a Christian anywhere, certainly here, in this age, in this country, is not easy work. It is not best that our work should be very easy. We do not even know what our work will be to-morrow, or where it will be, but only that it will be somewhere, and that it will have hardship in it if it is noble, and that our Leader, who is found in fashion as a man, will be there, wherever it is, with us, Himself the great workman. Men in earnest, rising from their knees, never fear outward difficulty; they fear pusillanimity, low standards, lack of life, in themselves. Twice the Divine Voice speaks. It says, first, "Stand still." Stand still, O impatient, eager, unthinking, unbelieving men! Stand still, men of unregulated activity, of unconsecrated knowledge, of swift and sweeping passion, of intemperate desire! Stand still, reckless competitions, grasping enterprises, immoderate labors and furious amusements, of these hurrying days and heated nights! Stand still, boundless ambition, overwrought and over-confident brain, from your wild chase for bubbles in the air! Stand still, selfish traffic, corrupted legislation, Mammon and Passion and Vanity Fair, an unprincipled press, a frivolous society, a worldly-minded and mercenary Church! Stand still and see the salvation of God! Stand still, O lustful appetite and unfeeling avarice and cruel pride and headstrong self-will in the unchildlike and unchristian heart!

But go forward, men of duty, men of honor, men of

faith, men of God! Speak to the children of the Christian Israel soberly; speak encouragingly to one another, you who have long borne a burden that presses hard and borne it for your covenant's and your sanctuary's sake. "The Lord shall fight for you." Go forward, mercy and charity, works of faith and love, missions, healings, sacrifices, praises, reconciliations,—go forward, O kingdom, in every soul and every land till they all are the kingdom of our God!

In the Morning Prayer, just after we say our Belief, are two supplications,—one for divine deliverance, one that our own doings and goings may be righteous. In the everlasting law are two tables of commandments,—one of reverence for Him, invisible, who shows us His salvation, the other of charity for the brother whom we have seen,—and both are from Heaven.

THE ONE QUESTION IN CONDUCT.

Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."—*Acts* iv. 19.

The two men are prisoners; but who will say that they are not free? Great things may be expected of any man when he has gained the moral liberty to put this question first, "Whether it be right." The liberty of a Roman citizen at that time in the Province of Judea was costly. Fifteen hundred miles from the imperial throne on the Tiber an officer of the Roman Police said, "With a great price obtained I that freedom"; and it frightened him when he found he had put chains on St. Paul, who had inherited his franchise with his blood. But, like all mere political independence, that of the great empire of the world stopped far short of the bold question of St. Peter and St. John. It secured mortal rights; but, it could never confer either the conscience which inquires, or the power to perform, *what is right.* That distinction between *rights claimed* and *right done* runs very deep, dividing the world into two orders of souls. It may be pure selfishness that insists on its rights. It must be unselfish duty that chooses what is right and does it in singleness of heart. The conflict had begun when these two Christian men, alone, unarmed, at the bar of a court which held justice

and life equally cheap, answered its threats with a tone of tranquil superiority. A new commonwealth had just risen from the grave of Christ. It was moving out among the nations. And here was the watchword of its leaders, "Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

Thinking men, I imagine, of all classes must say, as they watch the workings of Christianity, and the general drift of social and business life, in our times—Here is an extraordinary contradiction. The religion of Jesus Christ is the public, traditional, accepted belief. One name is blazoned on all the banners that float over all the encampments. So we call it a Christian nation. And nobody denies that, whatever may be true of Christian persons, the Christianity of Christ is a religion of righteousness.

We have one outward witness to the religion of Jesus Christ. It is the Christian propriety of domestic habits; the Christian talk of the railway and parlor; the Christian tone of literature; the Christian fashion of Sunday and ceremony; the Christian oath at the witness-stand; the Christian prayer at wedding and funeral. It is represented here by this building, this congregation, that Bible, the silent symbols. It is our nominal Christianity.

But is there not wanted another witness? Put all these signs and voices together,—build and plant and sing and preach the religion as you will,—have you got the religion? Would they all of themselves make it true to man's heart, or a reality in his life? As the eyes of God run to and fro over the Christian world does He not seek some other proof than all of these public professions that men love Him and honor Him, that Christ lives in His Church?

This brings us exactly to the vital point of the matter.

The original Christianity was a religion of righteousness. Behold the Divine Man! Read what He said. Observe the proportions of His doctrine,—how much about duty, about character, about right and wrong, the glory of right, the wretchedness of wrong; how little about any thing else! Notice what kind of people hated Him, —corrupt office-holders, plausible washermen of ecclesiastical cups and platters, hypocritical devourers of widows' houses, dancing women with murder and lust nestling together in their hearts, traders in virtue and blood, whose flesh was fattened and whose fortunes flourished by a politic selfishness. Notice what kind of people loved Him,—men that wanted to be honest and true, women that wanted to be strong in charity and pure in heart, in the midst of a crafty and adulterous generation. Infer from these passions that He crossed, and from the noble aspirations that He always invited and invigorated, what it was, after three years of loving work, that drove the nails through His merciful hands and His untiring feet into the cross. Settle it with yourself in this way, what was the vital core of His ministry? Learn the secret essential in His message, which made it a Gospel. Tell it out to yourself, what it was that all the openings of Heaven about His Person, the songs in the sky at His birth, the miracles, the midnight intercessions, the purified Temple, the mystery of Sacraments, the dove at the Jordan, the angel at Gethsemane, the uplifted Hands, the commissioned Apostles, really sought as the end. Was it not *righteousness in man?* Incorruptible, fearless, single-hearted, the same everywhere, steadfast against every temptation? Was it not to set up a kingdom of "right," over every dark and foul force on earth, its foundations laid within the living soul, its frame and pillars, its treasure and majesty, visible to

every eye? Did not Christ come and die to beget by a new faith a race of men right-thinking, right-feeling, right-reverencing, right-working? He had now but just ascended out of sight. The power of His Spirit shed abroad had illuminated His messengers and resounded through the first sanctuary of His Church. Two apostles there, knowing Him thoroughly, sure of His meaning, preaching Him, ready to die for Him, are told to shut their lips, teaching or preaching no more in that grand and blessed name. Yonder is the prison. Stones and scourges lie at hand. The blood scarcely yet dry at Calvary shows that these magistrates' threats are not empty. The two men hear and see. Nothing comes into their minds but one open answer: "Whether it be right." Not whether it be prudent, politic, safe, expedient, profitable, or even, "necessary" as those reckon necessity who mean by it getting on or getting up in the world, but "Whether it be right."

I take that to be the fundamental ground in practical Christianity. Many other necessary things have from time to time been crowded into its place: things of high pretension and considerable value; things imposing by intellectual power and lovely to look at; things of speculation, of imagination, of reason, of form, of routine, of what is superb in skill and beautiful in art. The pathway of Christian history is strewn with them all along. But we had better go back to the beginning. There was one St. Peter and one St. John; they stood close to the Master. They showed there with great simplicity, and once for all, what this new religion is. For what is Catholic, for what is Evangelical, for what is churchly, for what is reasonable, for what is true as Christ is true, we had best go nowhere else but there. This is what we mean by the appeal to primitive an-

tiquity and apostolical authority. *They* make the substance of personal Christianity to be a character that you can trust. They put foremost the personal conscience: and they join it to God in the living bond of Jesus Christ. The whole supernatural revelation signifies holiness. Dogma, formularies, symbols, sermons, exist for that,—for character. It is the decisive test, as to every particular action, as to its being done or let alone,—"whether it be,"—not lucrative, fashionable, popular, comfortable,—but "*right*." This is saying that we have found,—there in that municipal court-room of Jerusalem,—what the true relations of things are in the kingdom of God. All are sacred; but some are secondary; one is primary:—a likeness of every Christian character to the character of Christ. Call Christianity a temple; this is its foundation. Call it a kingdom, this is its constitutional principle, or law. Call it a tree,—this is the root. Call it a stream,—this is the spring. Call it a creed,—this is the conclusion of all its articles. What the world wants *first*, the want which brought the Son of man from the right hand of the Father to save it,—is a people whose sons and daughters believe it to be right to hearken unto God more than unto men, and, so believing, live by their faith.

Does the world want this less now than ever before? Take two of the great departments of human conduct, for a criterion. Take that one where most of you *men* here spend the greater part of your faculty and time. We call it by the vague name of business-life. It is made up for the most part of the handling, making, and interchange of things of material value. It would seem that the highest law of all this traffic, the ideal mercantile condition, would be that the dealers and producers, sellers and buyers, should trust one another, and not be

disappointed in that trust:—that the money, the interest, the good name, of each one should be safe in his neighbor's hands. These business-men are the sons of fifty generations born and reared in a nominal Christianity. But *are* the property, the interest, the good name, so safe? Are not these men watching one another with distrustful anxiety all the time? To a vast extent are not the forms and processes of trade and commerce methods of protecting one man from another's rapacity? What are all the complicated functions of the attorney, the court, the notary, the police, but a standing presumption that men will cheat if they can? Why so many safeguards, if confidence and uprightness are the rule? Every little while comes a crash. Some hitherto unquestioned reputation collapses in disgrace. A merchant, a banker, a contractor, a trustee of orphans' inheritances, fails;—and in the case I am supposing he not only fails but so fails that integrity, truth to his creditors, gratitude to his friends fail in him and fail with him. The man fails,—not merely his skill, his enterprise, or his venture. The tumbling down of all the towers and steeples of the town ought to send less shock and gloom through the air. Then, on the other hand, there appears amongst you, now and then, a man of solid virtue,—holy virtue—so true, so unseducible and unbribable, that everybody does trust him, and is never betrayed. The very rarity and refreshment of the sight tell to the same conclusion. There is a wide-spread lack of simple reverence for the right. In the face of the formidable kings of the market and queens of society too few are found saying with those splendid specimens of manhood at Jerusalem, "Whether it be right." There is some defect in our training. Right is not *first;* it comes *after* profit, after office, for-

tune, position, respectability, a living. In the summing up of Old Testament morality there were three requirements of God: "Do justly" was the first of the three. In the new Gospel test there are two conditions of acceptance, for every nation; and working "righteousness" is one of the two.

From business turn to social entertainment. That sphere does not lie outside either the sanctions or the sympathies of the religion preached by St. Peter and St. John. If there are any sorts of social amusement too bad for the presence of Christ it is because they are too bad for man and for woman. Christianity is in the world of common social life not to prohibit it or to ask leave to look on, but to regulate it by its rule, helping to sweeten it by its charity, and to elevate it by its chaste nobility. Yet as one sees what passes, and listens to what is said, in this play of the social spirit, he wonders how often the participators, the managers, the movers, ask of this or that feature of the spectacle "Whether it be right." Other things are considered intensely. Through the shadowy chambers of countless young minds troop day and night the figures of the fascinating drama, in fancy, in preparation, in memory, in vivid present delight. But are the usages, the fashions, the things said, the forms of pleasure, summoned conscientiously to the fair judgment of a personal conscience? Are the going or staying, the indulgence or rejection, the tasting or refusing to taste, the expenditure, the style, the talk, the dress, the drink, brought to this Christian criterion of right and wrong? I speak of no artificial standard or rule:—but does the question of duty,—of rectitude by *any* rule, of sin by *any* standard, get a fair and clear hearing at all? Do you think not only whether the doubtful thing will harm your-

self, but whether it will tempt some one weaker, or younger, or more exposed, to infamy? If not, remember, there is a law, written on the soul not by any human hand, that neither splendor nor beauty, neither music nor mirth, can ward off the curse that waits on that unrighteous social life.

From these serious facts in the drift of opinion, and the dangers to our better life, you will be apt to agree—you laymen—that there is a loud call to reconsider on what elements in our Religion, in these times, we ought to lay the principal stress.

In the Gospel of our Lord there are proportions. In one sense the bark of a fruit tree is as necessary as the root or the sap, the limbs of the body as the heart. But after all we build badly, and we grow badly, unless we set things in their order, always with a view to the one end, and keep the essentials supreme. In the Religion of Christ the one end is character. In the Kingdom of God the honors are for those who are good and true; uprightness is the nobility; and the business of the citizens is not only to take the name of their King, and to bow in His presence, but to be like Him. An apostolic faith is not handed down, but it fails on the way, unless it carries with it an apostolic obedience,—a personal conscience like that of Peter and John, apostles but also brave and earnest men. The most glorious prediction any prophet ever spoke of the Church of the Future was when it was said, from God, "My people shall be all righteous." The Church would put on her beautiful garments with less delay if this were better understood and more distinctly proclaimed. Let dogmatism, let religious routine and professional ambition, learn to say first and everywhere, "Whether it be right,"—in street and market, in policy and controversy, in meat and in

drink,—let them instruct and inspire young men and young women to think that thought, to apply that test, to guide and shape and color their life courageously by that grand principle of the Son of God, and what a new age might even some of us here live to see!

Before mammon, before the spirit of society, before gain and fashion, before all the world's rulers and elders and scribes, make your answer for God, each one alone, and then stand. In a way that will need no subtle imagination to explain, the grand issue of that old trial in Jerusalem will be yours also: "So when the elders had further threatened them they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them: for all men glorified God for that which was done."

Praying in this Sunday's collect for the spirit to think and do always such things as are right, have no anxiety about the results of your conduct. The laws of character work on unchanged for ever. For patient continuance in well-doing there are, and ever will be, in any world, in any age, glory and honor and immortality. For every soul that doeth evil, there will be tribulation and anguish, somewhere, everywhere, in any world, in any age. Righteousness only is immortal. Christ is Heaven. Character is beyond any first or second death. Get it to-day, if you have not got it: keep it, make it stronger, and it will be safe in the Son of Man,—who says to you, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

ELIJAH AT CARMEL.

Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

"ELIJAH went up to the top of Carmel. And he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now and look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand."—*I Kings* xviii. 42–44.

MOUNT CARMEL is itself a natural figure of that grand person who for almost twenty-eight hundred years has been associated with its name. It is solitary; it is struck by many storms; there is a visible contrast of its firmness with the fickleness of the sea that frets at its foot; and altogether it gives an uncommonly clear impression of independent stability of character. It has also, in some sense, a historical renown like that of the great Prophet and Reformer who lived with God, and prayed for his nation, in its caverns and on its top. Standing in the centre of the coasts of southern Syria, it breaks apart, with a dark wedge of rocks and cedars, the even outline where the shore of Palestine generally slopes to the Mediterranean. On the west is the main outlook, a bold headland fronting those waters which, at the time the text was written, floated the only commerce of the globe. So it happened that this mountain-peak, while lonely in itself, formed a conspicuous waymark, connecting the two continents. Behind it lies Asia asleep, the dull theatre of the decaying prosperity of the past, where

the true, royal virtue of God's elder heroes, like Joshua and Samuel, had sunk to the political debauchery of a court half corruption and half cruelty, and where the best life yet known on earth had degenerated to such a mockery of all manhood and womanhood as Elijah saw every day in Ahab and Jezebel. Before it there is opening the scene of the living dramas of European civilization, and its unknown child farther west. It is at this point, a kind of gateway between two ages, that we meet Elijah the Tishbite. The question is, will the faith in the True God, which this single man holds alone there in his heart, conquer and occupy the heart of the world, —east and west—or not? He is the representative of a Revealed Religion, the religion of the God of the Bible and the Church. Is there living power enough in it to control the action and the thought, the governments, the enterprise, the science, the life, of these nations that are to come? The life-breath of that religion is prayer. Apply whatever tests we may to the answers to prayer, the practice of prayer is everywhere a test of the reality of faith.

There had already been, on Carmel, two or three such trials. Some pious hands had put up an altar there. Queen Jezebel, in her licentious fury, had cast it down. Elijah, always plain-spoken and always fearless, rebuked her, as John the Baptist, the Elijah of the New Testament, did Herodias, and as John Chrysostom, the later Elijah of Constantinople, did the Empress Eudoxia. Ahaziah sent his guards to take him prisoner. Elijah prayed and the fire fell from heaven and burnt them up; the first fifty and the second fifty. Ahab, who found it easy to make every other subject tremble, trembled at these prayers. Eight hundred and fifty false prophets of Baal come up to Carmel, in answer to Elijah's challenge,

to try their god with his, in the august prayer-test of miracle. They cry all day to the fire-god, for a flame to light their sacrifice; in vain. Elijah lifts one petition, and the fire burns up the offering and the wood, and licks up the water in the trench. No wonder the Pagan Pythagoras, a master of Greek wisdom, four centuries after Elijah was dead, searching all countries for materials for his heathen philosophy, travelled to Mount Carmel, to find out the secret of that prophet's power. No wonder the Roman General and Emperor, Vespasian, half a thousand years later still, conquering Jerusalem, turned aside from his march to make a pilgrimage to the same memorable spot, to listen there, it was said, for some whisper from that mighty oracle.

We have to-day, in the collect, a prayer about our prayers; and for an illustration of the matter we turn to Mount Carmel.

There is a famine. Guilty and innocent alike are parched with drought. This man, Elijah, is sitting alone at nightfall on the top of the mountain, looking off upon the sea. Rain clouds will rise there if anywhere. The sun has scorched Samaria for three years and a half, and now it is setting in a cloudless sky, with every sign of a renewal of the dryness and distress tomorrow. The prophet's face on the Mount is bent to the earth between his knees, and covered with his mantle, the posture of prayer. Too much absorbed in his supplication to look up he directs a servant to go away from him and watch the western horizon. He goes, and comes back. There is not only no rain, but no cloud. "He said, *There is nothing.*"

We can all place ourselves by the side of that sad, solitary heart,—as sad and solitary, probably, as any great, true heart that ever lived. Most hearts that are

earnest at all, and go down in their life beneath the surface of things, have their sad and solitary hours. All that *we* can do seems to have been done. Patience has waited, energy has labored, the ingenuity of pain, or poverty, or love, has turned this way and that, and exhausted every resource. We have prayed; and we certainly thought we prayed in faith. The trouble still presses hard. The comfort does not come. The rebellious will is not reconciled to its cross. The unbelieving questions that start up out of the problem and mystery of life will not let us alone. Anger, envy, appetite, ambition,—enemies that we have been fighting for years, —will not lie down and be still. The bereaved house will not put on its cheerful look again. The wandering feet of a wayward child, or the straying affections of a faithless friend, are not turned back. The spiritual dryness within us is not refreshed. The famine in the heart burns on.

This is one form of religious discouragement. It is not an intellectual difficulty. The mind has been educated in belief, has been familiar with the Records of Revelation, has no quarrel with its doctrines, accepts the creed of the Church. The difficulty is in our intercourse with God,—a trouble of the most practical kind. If hindered in prayer, we are hindered in the very breath of the Christian life.

The universal experience of humanity says, "I cannot solve my own doubts; I cannot foil my own tempters, or forgive my own sins, or make atonement for my own lost innocence or lost time, or lift myself to Heaven. My own sympathies will not bear up my weakness." All the voices within us together cry, "Reach up your hands to the Almighty Comforter. Fly to your Father. Tell your troubles out to the Great High Priest

who has suffered for you, was tempted as you are, and is touched with the feeling of your infirmities."

Suppose the disciple is teachable, he puts up his prayer. But then something unexpected happens. It happens oftener than some tranquil-minded people, of easy constitutions and comfortable fortunes, imagine. Some soul comes back and says, "There is nothing. These inward infirmities still press down my spirit, and I am wretched." Another says, "*My* cross is in my neighbors. These people about me, in my house, or my business, or my social circle,—I have prayed for them, but they are still censorious, unreasonable, uncongenial, cruel." Another says, "This dear life at my side, that I have entreated the Great Giver of Life to spare and lengthen out, is *not* spared. No medicine, or climate, or tender watching, avails: the slender life-stream is ebbing away from the wrecked and stranded body as before, and presently I shall have left only the body, to be buried." Another says, "This erring, or estranged heart, that is so near my own,—my son, my husband, my father,—is not turned by my intercessions, or by Him who is said to hold all hearts in His Hand and to turn them as the rivers are turned. There is no look of pity on the burning sky. I hear no sound of rain. There is nothing."

Here are four kinds of religious disappointment.

The first is caused by unrelieved human sorrow. Men who mean, in some superficial way, to be Christians, make now, by thousands, the mistake that was made when Christ took our suffering flesh and walked in Judæa. Their first thought of God is that of a contributor to their comfort. Christianity is a convenience, physical or mental. It is a means to an end,—and that not the glorious end of being Christlike, with a nobility of soul, a charity and a purity like Christ's,—but the infe-

rior end of security from pain. It is not the victory that overcometh the world, but an insurance against its accidents. The feeling is, "Now that I have taken the Lord to be my God, He will suspend, at my request, His ordinary rules of natural retribution: He will take away what is distressing and give me, for the asking, what is agreeable." And then, if the expected exemption fails, there comes instead of it a reaction of disbelief. Why send up prayers if they return unanswered into the bosom? Not long ago I heard the dismal complaining of a woman, not lunatic, but sane, if atheism is ever quite sane, who had let go every sunbeam of her Christian daylight, and sunk to angry despair, because, by the wrongs of men and the accidents of nature, she had been both impoverished and bereaved. A few days since I sat travelling by the side of a terribly stricken man, a stranger, who told me that, the week before, his wife and all his children, in the far west, had been burned to death in the night, through the carelessness of a servant: and that the news reached him only a few hours after he had given himself on his knees to God and begun a new life of prayer. His faith was not uprooted. He said, with affecting sincerity, that he was thankful a faith had been given him just as he needed it to bear his desolation. But the question struggled in his reason,—as we all find it sometimes struggling,—*why* is this? The answer is not very far away. The promises of God contain no guaranty that when we are seeking first the kingdom of ease, or outward prosperity, we shall find it. We are not sure to find it even at the foot of the altar. The wrong motive weakens the supplication. Some such prayers are answered, and some are not. God may grant an imperfect petition to lead a weak soul on to prayers of greater spiritual earnest-

ness and depth. But He has never pledged that exemption from suffering of mind or body shall be a reward of even the devoutest trust. In the Old Testament it was national not personal prosperity that was promised to the faithful people. All through this life, in our prayers as in every thing else, we are under a discipline of mystery, working on little by little towards the world of perfect light, where the mystery will be opened and the satisfaction will be complete. It is the spirit's interior strength and everlasting health that Christ is always seeking. Any material relief is but a door and a step inward to that. It is right to pray for a respite from pain, or tears, or death. So our Lord, in His blessed humanity, prayed amidst the agonies of the garden. But if faith is true it will never depend a moment on any visible manifestation of the delivering power, nor will it fail to offer thanksgiving, or to pray again, because the desired bounty is withheld. "Nevertheless, O Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt:" that is a petition that *never* is unanswered. Faith's true office is, not to claim escape from grief, so much as to cry for willingness to bear it, and for peace under it. Though our poor disappointed *senses* return, like the servant, after searching the unchanged sky, and are obliged to report six times over, "There is nothing," yet such a faith as this will be our prophet on the mount. She will keep her strength, her serenity, and her hope, till she is satisfied with knowing that her Redeemer liveth.

A second class of religious discouragements are those that are created by our own slow religious progress. We expected, when we began, to make rapid improvements, moving on with the steady step of conquerors, but we find ourselves apparently stationary. The mind

has an argument with its Maker, and it reasons after this manner: "God, by His very character as God, must desire me to be pressing forward swiftly in all the graces of the Spirit. I was told, when I took my confirmation-gift, that I should go from strength to strength, and that even dry valleys of Baca in my journey should turn into wells of refreshment, full of living water; I heard that every Communion-day would be an Elim, with its palms and fountains, and that the wilderness before me would break forth into singing. I expected to grow, evidently and consciously, from Lent to Lent, and that, from month to month, one fault after another would disappear from my conduct,—passion would cool, unbelief would yield, apathy would kindle into enthusiasm, and Satan get more and more behind me. I have tried and I have prayed for that advancement. Yet here I stand stock still. The old enemy is suffered to return upon me. The familiar temptations ensnare my feet. My daily business in the world is the same engrossing, belittling slavery. Appetite, my Ahab, temper, my Jezebel, are as despotic as ever. Unclean imaginations crawl back over their well-worn, slimy trail. The fascinations of the world, which last year's mortifications, or some sober bereavement, appeared for a while to disenchant, have put on their brilliant badges with the gay season, or the laying off of my mourning garment. Duty does not become more delightful. No. This Christian life, however well begun, is pinched, and dull, and barren. Can the Scripture promises be true? If God wanted me to triumph, and be a saint, would He not appear for me, and come and help me on? It is drought in me, and there is nothing in the sky."

Let the Prophet of Carmel reply to you, "Go again, seven times." In the Hebrew idiom seven is put for an

indefinite number, and signifies completeness, or finishing, however many literal times or things there may be. Elijah's meaning was, Keep on going. Go till you can announce the blessing. God has not told you when, or where, or how it will rise. Look off where clouds are bred till you can discern the little wreath of vapor, no bigger than your hand, on the rim of the sea. A Christian's expectation does not depend on appearances. The showers, even while the sun burns, may be hanging unseen in the laboratories of the upper air, and any moment may condense them.

When you seem to be doing nothing but suffering shame, and repenting, God may be doing most. His preparations of power and peace and salvation within the soul may be as noiseless and invisible as the fine mist over the Mediterranean that was presently to pour down the sides of the mountain. Spiritual improvements, too, are not only beyond our reckoning; they are gradual, like all other growths on an unfriendly soil. Not only that. The quickened conscience and rising standard of duty sometimes prevent the progress from being seen even when it is actual. Further yet, self-discontent, the sense of unworthiness, is among the necessary instruments that secure a sound and healthy reformation. These are possible explanations. But the great antidote to despondency lies beyond. We know that every true prayer is answered, not because the answer is in our souls or before our eyes, but because God has told us no such prayer shall ever be unanswered at last. We must hold on to those eternal promises, like the fixed lights in Heaven, which are the same in earthly famine or plenty, which shine apart from the earthly atmosphere, and whether our little enterprises flourish or miscarry.

Under the same rule we can bring our distress at the disbelief or the sin of others. Some of these are so dear to us, perhaps, that their continued waywardness or infidelity is a torture almost insupportable. If ever the affections enter into the fellowship of the Saviour's suffering, it is when they plead this agony and bloody sweat for souls nearest in nature yet farthest off in prodigality. And the more is staked on prayer, because every human resource is sure to have been tried and exhausted. There then is faith's special and most glorious opportunity. Go again, seven times. Hide your face, if you will,—because it is your own blood that is dishonored, or your own house that is profaned. The Prophet hid his in his mantle. If we could see to-day the "multitude that no man can number" of saints brought home at last by the intercessions of sons, and daughters, and companions, and friends, we should know the meaning of that word "instant" in prayer. "Go home," said one of the Bishops of North Africa, to Monica, the mother of him who was afterwards St. Augustine, when she inquired what more she could do than weep and pray for her then dissolute son; "Go home, and simply do as you have done: the child of such prayers and such tears can never be lost." The Church of the whole West, with that great name of Augustine honored on her lips, witnesses to his assurance.

We are dismayed at the public calamities of the Kingdom of God. But, I take it, the modern Church never knew quite so dark a day as that when *all* the altars of Jehovah were thrown down, when robbery and license shared the throne of Israel between them, and when only one forsaken messenger of God was left, travelling like a fugitive from one gloomy cave and one hill-top to another. Yet it was then that the great words were

spoken, and the great Truth triumphed. Those words were spoken, and that Truth triumphed irrespective of numbers, of wealth, of all outward indications of success. The power that prevailed, sowing the seeds of future harvests of glory, was the unyielding, undismayed faith in the prophet's soul. And the voice of that faith was prayer.

In our Christian warfare we are to drop all calculations, and lean upon God. There will be no disappointment, because there is no expectation but from Him. You may be as lonely as Elijah, yet like him you can not be alone. In the cave, on the mount, under the juniper-tree, in the chamber with the dead, and before the angry king, in the wild glen where the ravens fed him, he had a Companion. The land and the sea and the clouds were his, in the marvellous possession of his perfect trust. Kings and famines, storms and armies, were in the power of his prayer. "All things," says the Gospel, "are yours, if ye are Christ's." You will be as the mountain that can not be moved. He will make you to walk in peace upon His high places.

TWO MOUNTAINS.

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way. And it shall come to pass when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal."—*Deut.* xi. 26–29.

Farther on, in the history, we have an explanation of this putting a blessing on Mount Gerizim, and a curse on Mount Ebal. Moses has already pronounced to his people the divine laws of their commonwealth, as he had received them from God; and in this Deuteronomy, or Second Book of the Law, he repeats them. Still he apprehends that on their entrance into the Land of Promise, whose borders they have now reached, the temptations of idolatry and sensual passion together will prove too much for their religious memories and their conscience. He fears that the splendors of Sinai, the mercy of the Passover, and the majestic revelations under fire and cloud in the wilderness, all the past witnessings of their Faith, will be left behind at the passage of the Jordan, and forgotten on its western bank. To forestall so terrible a possibility he, or rather the Spirit through him, arranges a table of commandments in the natural scenery, august and solemn enough in its impression to act as a perpetual memorial of their accountability, not only

on that generation but on their successors forever. It answers to the "commandments" and "promises" named in the collect for this day.

The dramatic features of this exhibition are these. As they passed the dry bed of the stream, on their way into Palestine, certain men of the several tribes were to take up stones, worn smooth by the current, and bear them forward in their hands. Reaching the shore they will find two mountains, rising abruptly from a fertile plain, sharply facing one another, with a narrow valley between; Mount Gerizim on the south, and Ebal on the north. On one of these heights they are to rear an altar of the stones brought up from the channel. Having engraved on this geographic tablet a copy of the law, and offered a peace-offering, there is to be a twofold division of the host. Half of the twelve tribes are stationed on one of these peaks, and half on the other. Thus on the two sides of the great Judean notch they take up the majestic, alternating chorus, answering one another in their tremendous antiphon across the valley, sending into one another's hearts and up into the skies the great burden of holy meaning which God's inspiration has put upon their lips. They foreshadow their national destiny, and shout aloud the two possible issues of its moral choice. Promise on one side; menace on the other. Blessings on obedience from Gerizim. Curses on impiety from Ebal. The great cardinal virtues to be kept are enumerated by one choir; the vices to be rejected by the other. As if to grant types the most significant and aid the impression by correspondences in the very theatre of the display, Mount Ebal, we are told, "is a barren, stony, and arid crag"; so would God "smite the apostates with barrenness, hunger and misery." Gerizim was "covered with luxuriant verdure, streams of

running water and cool and shady groves"; so would God "bless the faithful Israelites with abundance, beauty and peace." It is a grand prophecy in landscape of the judgments of God's eternal Providence. Henceforth their future, in the country they conquer and colonize, is in their own hands. The two ways of national and individual life, to ruin or to glory, part plainly before their eyes.

The things shown in that early age of symbols were only outward patterns of what goes on in facts and decisions within us. Gerizim and Ebal raise their significant and speaking summits before every life.

I. For, in other words, life is overspread, permeated, and bound in, by God's Law. That law occupies every inch of its extent and every fibre of its organization. Obey and be blessed, disobey and be accursed; here is the sharp alternative imprinted on every department of our being. Your body, your business, your appetites, your affections, your intellect, your memory, your judgment, your imagination, your household manners, your talk at the table and in the street, your practice of your profession or performance at your trade, your levity or sobriety, your temper and your tongue, your bargains and your salutations, your correspondence and your meditation, your action and your reveries, your hands, heart and brain, all are penetrated and encircled by this law. There is no neutral district you can escape to; no city of refuge whose gates shut out responsibility; no corner so dark and hidden that the law does not lie just as literally and palpably on your breast as in the blaze of day; no spot you can run to where its swift-pursuing arm does not reach after you, and feel you out, and thrust its hand down into your secret desires, and drag all your thoughts and doings back to open

judgment. Once passed the Jordan of your birth into the land of being, there stand the two mountains of blessing and cursing. Wander where you will, or hide where you will, you can not avoid the shadow of one or the sunlight of the other, blighting or blessing. The law clings to you for eternity.

II. This law is permanent and unchangeable, as its Author is, being the uniform will of an unchangeable mind; not one thing for preachers and communicants, but for persons who never chose to confess themselves Christians another and easier thing: not strict for one seventh of your time and lax for six sevenths: not varying with situations and fluctuating with opportunities for concealment or degrees of temptation: not satisfied to be respected in the dwellings at one end of a city while it is despised in the warehouses and offices at the other end. It is not justice for a judge but mere expediency for a politician. It is not equity in chambers but policy in the lobbies of a state-house. It is not fidelity for a journeyman and fraud for the master-workman. It is not simplicity for a missionary, but duplicity for a merchant. It is not charity on holidays or abstinence in Lent, with hard-heartedness and indulgence the rest of the year. It is not respect for men of rank and distinction, but contempt for men that are clerks or porters. It is not dissipation for a single man, but temperance for a father, and purity for a husband. It is not kindness in a hovel and haughtiness in a parlor. It is not modesty in a sempstress, but vanity in the lady she adorns. It is not amiability in a servant, but petulence in a school-girl. It is not love and meekness in Sunday school, but envy and malice at an assembly. It is not devotion and brotherhood at the communion-table, but bigotry in the ecclesiastical council-room, worldliness at

the market, and vituperation in controversy. On the contrary, the law is one thing. It is the morally and religiously right. It is the holy will of God. All that is not that is wrong. There are but two sides to the choice, for all positions and all persons. Whatever is not blessed obedience is accursed sin. No sophistry can confuse or blend these two together. Stupidity or indifference, neglect or long habit can not blur over the broad and deep distinction between them. No falsehood, of speech or practice, can intertangle them. It is as impossible to make those things one, which God has put asunder, as to divide those that God has joined. The mountains are not moved. Gerizim and Ebal never interchange their places, and there is no exalting of the valley that separates them.

III. Again, the consequences of this law which we are born and live under, in its twofold working, whether as visiting penalties upon its violators or peace and strength upon its servants,—are not to be prevented though they should be apparently obscured or postponed. This truth requires something more than a theoretic admission. How many of us realize it? that every offence against the Divine Will is *certain* to bring on, at last, its penal pain and sorrow,—even its delay aggravating its torment? that every faithful and religious act or feeling must yield its infallible return of joy,—the very hindrance enhancing its richness and depth? that Gerizim is *sure* of the fulfilment of its promise,—and Ebal *sure* of the execution of its warning?

1. Helps enough are given to enable us to realize it. God wrote the law on the living tablet of our human nature, at the creation of the soul; and every member in the Family shares personally in the light of that primitive revelation. He wrote it again, to refresh the fail-

ing recollection of His children, in visible commandments, on the tables of Moses, and every Sunday you hear its ten commandments on your knees. As if the single lesson were not enough, He condescended to discriminate the two branches of it and republish each in separate authority, from those twin heights at the gate of Judæa. And, when Patriarchs and prophets had ceased speaking, He embodied it in the spiritual form of His Son, and breathed it forth to win its way by love into the heart of ages through the affectionate entreaties of the Gospel and the Cross of Christ. Can we pretend the law is not made plain?

2. We let our short-sightedness be deceived by the slowness of its operation; and, because sentence against our evil works is not executed speedily, suffer our hearts to get set in us to do evil. But the majestic order of nature is not really so stable as the moral results of moral choice, from greatest to least. Disease is not so certain for the poisoned blood; early decay for the overtasked brain; a pain for a fracture, or a fever for breathing malaria,—as some day interior corruption is for vicious associations, as moral paralysis is for immoral indulgence, as the sting of remorse some day or other for a meanness or a crime, as agony of Spirit for all impiety toward God. Will the sun rise to-morrow? So will your abuse of this day's call to worship start up, on some future morrow, and be a scourge tormenting you. Will the stars come out above the clouds to-night? So must your secret sins, one by one, be not only revealed but react on your sensibility, like fire on tender flesh. All must be remembered; all must be reckoned for; all sin must be suffered for. If this is not God's assurance, by Bible and by conscience, nothing is. The laws of your soul are, in fact, not so likely to be suspended as the laws of health, the laws

of light, the laws of physical attraction and repulsion, of chemistry and astronomy. Because your soul persists in keeping up a guilty compromise between self-will and God's will,—resists the strivings of the Spirit, and will not yield its faith to Christ and yet suffers no immediate distress, none the less is the retribution of that faithlessness gathering and the offended law preparing its chastisements. Because your tastes are bent on a trifling, superficial, pleasure-seeking life, and all seems to go on prosperously now, none the less secure hang those balances of God wherein every day and night you spend must finally be weighed. Because your senses master your principles, and no instant judgment falls on your secret intoxication or lust, none the less will shame and infamy shoot their anguish into your distracted spirit under the public disclosures of the Future. Your cheated customer may go home unconscious of your fraud; but there is an Eye not thus deceived. The gift you brutishly deny to suffering, to poverty, to the Church of Christ, to the cause of charity or freedom or piety, may lie snugly among your treasures and still seem to be an element in your wealth; but hereafter you shall cry, "Oh that with all my goods together I could bring back that one moment when my little bounty was asked and refused, and I might have blessed my brother but would not!" So everywhere. Men change; not God. This material scene may cover up, for the present, the workings of divine retribution from our eyes; but all will come out, for the confusion of the guilty, for the comfort of the righteous and the clearing up of mysteries to faith. Think what we will, hope what we will, fear what we will, Gerizim and Ebal will not sink their heads into the plain.

IV. With every right-minded Christian it must be a

very earnest and very constant prayer, that he may gain larger and larger apprehensions of the extent and the sanctity of this Law,—the Law that puts him on a perpetual choosing between holiness and worldliness, as between blessing and cursing. The Psalmist, in one of his high moments, when the truth seemed to be flashing in upon him with peculiar vividness, breaks out into the hearty exclamation, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." With all our passive and formal assent to it, how feeble and languid is our perception of that breadth! When any of us should once come fully to realize it, and see no portion of his life over which that Law does not spread its control and press down its practical authority, must he not wake to a fresh sense of the solemnity of his being? As experience grows sober with us, and suffering overbalances comfort, and more of our friends stand on the other side of death than this, and our years wear on to their end, must we not all begin to yearn for deeper convictions of this doctrine; long to feel as we have never felt the eternal issues that hang on this choice, to have it somehow darted into our inmost faith, by the Spirit and grace of God, how exceeding wide and holy the commandment is, how two ways open and part before our feet at every point of our journey, with the responsibility of election meeting us at the angle; to behold with clear sight our Gerizim and Ebal commanding us to walk honestly into the Land of Life?

V. Another step in the doctrine is to trace up this commandment to its conscious and Personal Infinite Source. The Law has its seat in the Heart of God. No rigid, unfeeling abstraction is it, but the living Will of a living Father; no soulless necessity, inherent in matter, or incidental to its organization, but the appointing of that Personal Mind to which all nature belongs,—that

Spirit with which our spirits may commune; a Spirit who personally rejoices in our obedience, is personally wounded by our transgressions, grieves with our griefs, and answers, feeling for feeling, to our love. This is He who says to us every morning afresh, "Thou shalt, and thou shalt not. Do this and thou shalt live. Do not that, lest thou die." This is He who rears the mountains of blessing and cursing so clearly and compassionately before us in the constant Providences of His Hand that even careless eyes can not miss them. This is the God and Father not only of Moses but of Christ.

No doubt there is such a thing as respecting the laws of nature, only on the level of nature, as students of science might, without beholding in them the glory of Heaven, or revering in them the character of their Author. And no doubt there is such a thing as observing the laws of veracity, of honesty, of self-control, from motives of comfort, or policy, or some form of selfish welfare. In that case, we have not come to Christian morality, but only a thrifty prudence. On the contrary, the more we practice goodness because it is goodness, the more shall we be in a position to practice it because God is its Fountain. Choose the Right and scorn the Wrong; and there will be growing within you a sense of His Almighty Presence without whom no right could be, and all would be wrong. But remember that moral obedience can never be religious till it has God for its object,—God's Will for its guide,—and communion with God for its daily inspiration.

VI. And thus we are led up by this order of our subject to discover, finally, the positive grandeur of allegiance to the Divine Law. That grandeur is witnessed both by its nature and its effects.

1. In its nature. For obedience to the commandment

is of itself a noble and valiant element in character. It is no paradox to affirm that the obedient mind is a commanding mind. Springing from no slavish subserviency, but from the free and loyal consent of its highest reason and best affections, this deference to the Eternal Law becomes one of the loftiest attributes whether of the Christian or the manly soul. The Law that carries blessings in its right hand and curses in its left appeals to a deeper principle than selfishness. The blessings are not earthly advantages, but those spiritual gifts and honors, like confidence and holiness, love and faith, power and peace, which exclude all thought of self, and are kindred with the glory and purity of Heaven. The curses are those elements of spiritual ruin,—fear, hatred, passion, jealousy, despair, which impoverish the whole moral creation. The Law does not reveal its encouragements and threatenings from Gerizim and Ebal to make a rich or famous people, but a holy people.

2. So the second effect is holiness of life. The commandment is holy, just, and good; and so must its fruit be. The Church is given to organize piety and charity, the two forces of a blameless character, of a righteous society. What the responses across that eastern valley were to the Hebrews all the voices of Scripture, and the Light lightening every man that cometh into the world, are to us. What they aim to produce is spotless souls. What they enjoin is hands unstained by iniquity, and blameless hearts. What they ask, for witnesses and trophies, is men and women who will embody Christ's goodness in their life, and re-affirm the Truth, if need be, by their death. Say what we will of the ancient Dispensation, that Older Testament has higher standards of moral conquest and heroism than many of us have attained to yet. The commandments rewritten on that

hill-top, thirty-three hundred years ago, have found no full practical obedience yet, in the life of any society or people in history. Humanity has journeyed far westward, in the march of its empire, from Gerizim and Ebal. Has it ascended above their moral elevation?

The other effect of these commandments, with blessings on obedience and woes on the transgressor, is a preparation for Christ. In the divine order Moses must no less go before Messiah than the Saviour must come after and fulfil the Law. The very impossibility of a perfect moral obedience to God's Infinite and Perfect Will, just noticed, creates the necessity for reconciliation by a Redeemer of Love, and forgiveness for the shortcoming life, through the cross of God's manifested mercy. The strict commandment must be given, or the struggling and weary soul, labor-worn and helpless, would never feel the need or the blessedness of pardon. Patience and toil under the law, from childhood up, must come before we are ready to hasten, at our Lord's gracious "Come unto Me, and find rest." The schoolmaster leads us to Christ. Gerizim looks towards the Mount of Olives, and Calvary. The promised blessing is fulfilled; for the obedience of a servant ends in the liberty, and thanksgiving, and gracious acceptance of the child.

CHRISTIAN CONDITION AND CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

"Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first."—*St. Matt.* xx. 8.

If the whole passage is not familiar you can turn to it in the Second Lesson for this morning, where you will see how it stands connected with what goes before and comes after. It is one of those parables of which Jesus Himself, the Great Parable Preacher, tells us that they are not perfectly plain at first sight, and are not meant to be, but rather have their sense veiled a little so as to set the mind more eagerly and inquiringly at work to find it out. A recent German theological writer refers to as many as fifteen different treatises on this parable alone, proposing various explanations of its object, and there are some others not included in his list.

The principal persons and points in the imaginary transaction are a humane owner of an Eastern vineyard who has reached such a profound knowledge of the true trust of power and the responsibility of property that he employs his workmen quite as much for their benefit as his own: a central market-place where a large number of men, needing work, and more or less desiring it, are waiting for it together, as they may be seen in almost any Eastern city or large village to-day; successive gangs of these laborers filing off, at intervals of about

three hours each, to work in the landholder's vineyard, being invited if not urged to it by himself; and a reckoning at night, through the steward, when all the workmen are paid the same sum, the last comers being paid first; and when the all-day hands, though receiving what they bargained for, complain that the eleventh-hour workmen receive just as much, they are made to learn that envy is worse than idleness.

Something deeper, however, than this last lesson, every reader of the New Testament feels, is intended by the Saviour's solemn imagery: and what that something is is the question we now attempt to answer.

One exposition is that the parable refers, in the laborers, to complete Christians, thoroughly purified and holy persons, not only *called* into Christ's service but *perfected* in it, such as the disciple is supposed to be when he is ripe for Heaven,—the reckoning at nightfall being taken for the entrance into that everlasting blessedness. This is not admissible, because a part of them are found to be those envious complainers who contemptibly murmur against the generous vine-grower for doing as he will with his own,—the last we hear of them being that, though they had received the wages, they were sent away with a humiliating rebuke very unlike the heavenly welcome. Another decisive objection is that the evangelical teaching does not allow us for a moment to conceive of eternal life as a compensation for what man does, or of Heaven as wages earned by work.

Some say the design is to show that the judgment of a Christian's character does not depend on the length of time he works in Christ's service, but on the energy and spirit with which he works, be the time longer or shorter. This, too, is inadmissible; because nothing is

said of the one-hour servants working with more energy or a better spirit than the rest.

Some have supposed that the Saviour taught here that all souls that are finally accepted into His heavenly kingdom will be equally rewarded,—*i. e.*, raised to one uniform grade of spiritual honor and joy, irrespective of their differing religious attainments and doings in this life, those that are brought late to repentance by some storm of trouble or wrench of agony standing hereafter on the same terms of glory with early-trained believers and life-long servants of the Master,—all alike springing at once without distinction to the full measure of the immortal vision and beatitude. Inadmissible again; because what is asserted is that, though every laborer takes his penny, yet, as some take it grudgingly and others cheerfully, some with envy and others with charity to their neighbors, therefore, there are last which shall yet be first, and first which shall be last. This is not equality, but some kind of inequality.

It is interesting to be told that among the Ancient Church Fathers some suggest that Christ alluded, by the several hours of the working-day, to the great periods in the world's religious progress, the Divine Epochs, or Dispensations, with their living leaders,—Adam, Noah, Moses, and the Prophets,—all these former ages bearing the burden and heat of the world's long day, in their disadvantage and dimness of sight, while the Apostles and Early Christians were brought at once to the splendor of the Gospel Revelation. Something like this has always been a favorite theory of interpretation with a certain class of expounders, who imagine that, because Christ had Jews for His immediate hearers, He was always confining His teaching to their national manners and local ideas, instead of dropping His words,

like living and immortal seeds, to take root in *all* human hearts, and to spring up and bear blessed fruit in the spiritual experience of all after-time. Besides, whatever mere allusion to Jews and Gentiles may have been in the Saviour's mind, there could have been no exclusive application to them, for it is not easy to see how Adam, Noah, and Moses, or their contemporaries, were to be the murmurers at the end; nor did their earthly service last on to the gathering of the nations about the cross;—they all died in faith, among the shadows and faint foreglimpses, having nothing but the promise.

The most common impression, however, of the casual reading of the Parable is something like this:—that these hours of the day stand for the different stages in men's individual lives when they make a clear and obedient answer to the call of God upon their consciences and hearts: going into the vineyard answers to the choice of Christ over the world, in the new purpose or conversion of the soul earlier or later; but the end of the day is still put for the day of final Judgment, when all shall be gathered together, the first and the last, to hear their sentence, and be assigned to their eternal state in the unseen world. This, in the former part, seems to be the true understanding of the text; but in the latter part it certainly fails, for if the end of the day is the future Judgment then the last converts, serving but one hour of the twelve, would be actually represented as enjoying some permanent and final advantage in the next life over men who are faithful from their childhood: and it would be impossible not to draw an inference going much farther than the encouraging Gospel doctrine, which holds out hope to the dying penitent: for we should be obliged to suspect that somehow it is better to come late than early, and to bring the Lord the maimed and bro-

ken offering of a body and a spirit that have for years been defiled with voluntary sin and perverted to the world's wickedness, only dragged out of this depravity at the end—better this, than to surrender to Him the cleaner and completer sacrifice of a steadfast fidelity running through all the happy years of a Christian childhood, youth, manhood and old age:—a falsehood so gross that every honorable feeling revolts at it almost as unequivocally as the Bible condemns it.

Now, each one of these varying interpretations carries with it some phase or glimpse of Scriptural truth: wise and holy men have caught sight now of one and then of another, according to the bias of their studies, or the doctrinal systems to which they were pledged. Their very variety only illustrates the inexhaustible richness of spiritual nourishment that lies in every part of that word out of the mouth of God which is the Bread of Life on which the true Christian feeds and lives.

Another meaning, however, not exactly identical with either of these that have been mentioned, comes out of the Parable,—free from all the difficulties that we have seen to encompass the others, simple, direct, practical, and in harmony with every other instruction and doctrine of the Divine Instructor.

The prime mistake has been in taking it for granted that by the end of the day Christ means the end of the world, or the end of life, or the final Judgment. Other Parables and other passages in abundance set before us the certainty, as they forewarn us of the swift and solemn coming, of that,—like the Parables of the Tares and the Wheat, the Sheep and the Goats, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Ten Virgins, and the Unmerciful Servant. But our minds are only confused in a hopeless perplexity when we try to find in any portion of Christ's discourses

what belongs only to another portion. Let us briefly try, then, to discover in the weighty words just that, and no more than that, which our Lord intended to convey.

Take that common term that is constantly used around us, indeed is on our own tongues every day,—the word "Christian." It is used in two senses widely different from one another. By one of these two senses perhaps every person of us here now, younger and older, honest and dishonest, worshipper of God or worshipper of the world, holy or profane, is a Christian. This is a Christian country; we acknowledge nominally the Christian scheme of religion, conform measurably to Christian institutions, and, I am supposing, have been baptized into the Name and Body and Family of Christ. This is the *Christianity of condition.* It is the visible Christian estate or kingdom that Christ has set up on the earth. It is exactly what the Catechism makes the child say he thanks his heavenly Father for bringing him into,—"this *state* of salvation." Our first privilege is that we have been called into it. It is a state, or a place, where not only is salvation possible but where there is graciously provided every possible help, encouragement, and *means*, to make us really and finally saved persons. Here we are found. Here our lot is cast, from our birth on. This is the *first* sense:—the Christianity of condition and privilege. By virtue of it we are here worshipping and hearing the word, this day. Church, Bible, Sunday, Sacraments, Offertory, charitable labors, are the inestimable elements, the sacred features, the nourishing appointments, of this our visible Christian estate and home, —the "Vineyard" of the Parable;—some entering it early, some late. There are heathen beyond the bounds of Christendom, and heathen in the midst of Christian com-

munities, that are out of it. But most of us are in it. Christ said at the conclusion of the Parable, "Many are called."

But Christ said something else beside that, and along with that. He said, "but few are chosen." This turns us about to the other sense of the word. The foremost question in all this world, for each of us, dear friends, is whether to you and to me the name, in this other sense, can be applied or is actually applied by Christ Himself. Here is Christianity of another kind,—though of the kind which all that other and outer Christianity is meant and is in fact brought into the world to create. It is the Christianity not of condition but of character; not of provision but of possession; not offered and arranged merely, in names and visible ordinances, but chosen by the individual heart and taken in to regulate as a law of conduct and to tune and sweeten with the modulation of its music the individual life. This is to be a Christian in the deeper and truer meaning. It is to be Christ's man. It is to be had by having Christ Himself in the affections, reverence and loyalty of the soul. *He is* this personal and spiritual Christianity,—the Christianity of character, embodied and perfected. It is infinite and inexhaustible in Him. We get it only from Him, and only by the channel of a loving Faith. He came into the world to give it, to be its everlasting Fountain to men, the streams of this River of Life running every way as the four rivers of Eden flowed towards the four quarters of the earth. Not all of us, you know, in the Christian Family, have yet come to this:—and now you see why the Lord, after saying that "many are called," said also that "few are chosen." With his wonderfully wide-reaching and tender voice He *calls* us, every one: but only they who choose Him, loving and not

envying their fellow-men, showing His own Spirit, rejoicing in God's mercy and not murmuring at it are chosen by Him. So St. Paul presents the same thought in another figure:—"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may obtain." And so St. Peter urges, "Give all diligence to make your calling and your election sure." The mere "calling" no more makes the Christian character than being admitted to college makes a scholar, or enrolment in an army makes a brave and victorious soldier.

To see how all the parts of the narrative fit together into one consistent whole, in the Lord's illustration, turn once more to the passage. Just before, at the close of the preceding chapter, St. Peter is found, in his half-selfish but very human frame of mind, inquiring of Jesus, "Lo, we have forsaken all and followed Thee; what shall we *have* then?" Christ answers him by distinguishing between those glorious honors that await the apostles at His second coming, when they shall be purified and perfected, when creation itself shall be regenerated, after all their struggles and martyrdoms are over, and the "hundred-fold" of blessing which they should have here in the Church below. This last He immediately goes on to illustrate in the parable. As in many other places so here He calls this visible church on earth "the Kingdom of Heaven," because its origin, its purpose and its ends, are all *heavenly*,—even as the Son of Man, He declares, is always in Heaven even while He is among men. The "vineyard" here is, just as it was prophetically in the Psalms, in Solomon's Song and in the fifth of Isaiah, this outer Kingdom,—the Christian Israel, the Divine Commonwealth. The Master of it, in the careful foresight of His love, goes out early in the

morning; in the Greek the expression is very beautiful, "goes together with the morning,"—just as the old prophets had sung of Him,—"rising up early and sending them." Impartial in His plan He calls men to the blessing of Christian work wherever He finds them, passing none by. Not discouraged or weary He is always calling,—even shortening the last three hours' interval to two, to give the most negligent lingerers one more opportunity. It is very striking and very searching language which describes all men that are not working in Christ's field as idlers,—no matter how busy their idleness or how eager their worldly activity may be. The nightfall is not, in this case, the laborer's death, or judgment. It is only just what any nightfall is naturally taken to be, the end of one period of labor, one stage of the trial, one test of character. It is a judgment just as every turn in life, every closing opportunity, every literal ending of every day, every Sunday, and every chance to do good for God or man, brings a judgment of its own,—the one ultimate reckoning lying still far in the future. Collect to-night any of these nominal servants in Christ's outward cause who are here in this house; let them be reckoned with for what they have done and left undone,—for their use, neglect, or abuse of the openings set before them; for their feelings towards their fellow-workers, and towards God for His dealings with them:—will you not find their Master saying to them in substance almost exactly what is said here in this parable of so many centuries ago? You who began early, and you who began late, you have all alike had the "penny" that was promised you, for you have all had the common and open privilege of the Gospel and the Church, the prayers and the sanctuaries, the inspirations and the hopes, of your high calling.

But what have you done with them? Have you turned the Christianity of condition and privilege, for yourself, into the personal Christianity of choice and of character? What does your life testify? Where are your hearts turned, and where is your real treasure laid up? You have been all this time, be it less or more, in "this state of salvation"; but are you, or not, saved men and saved women? The length of time since you were baptized, or confirmed, or since you woke up out of your thoughtless and self-seeking life, is of very little consequence now. God came out together with the morning light of your first days and called you;—whether you made Him come and call again and again is now only a matter for penitential and humiliating recollection. All that is over. He rather inquires, How is it with you to-day,—at this present moment? Are you Christ's men? What were the motives of last week's business? What will they be when you go back to your work to-morrow? What do your thoughts oftenest run to? What is the color of your heart's secret and inmost fibre? What are your feelings toward the brother-souls that live and work and worship next you? for these are the mutual *judgments* which are the infallible tests whether we really choose and follow Christ or not. They bear sure witness. They are the fruitage on the branches of the vine. They assure us whether we are among those first in privilege who shall be last in further attainments and victories: whether we are among the few that are chosen, or only among the many that are called.

Is not this clear and consistent doctrine,—clear of every difficulty,—consistent not only with itself but with every part and portion of the Saviour's instruction?

The Great Householder who came out calling for us

with the morning was crucified also for us. Is not that enough to make serious and sincere men question themselves, and watch and pray? The parable strikes a terrible blow at the notion of any works of ours being profitable to God, or even to our own salvation. The quality, not the performance, is the accepted thing,—the heart of faith and love, not any self-conscious and self-complacent operations. One more opportunity is opened,—one more "day"—to turn the Christianity of mere condition and calling into the Christianity of character and choice, to make the visible religion we profess the indwelling, holy, and personal religion which belongs to them alone that are "chosen" of the Lord to be His forever.

FAITHFUL SERVING.

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."—*Daniel* vi. 10.

FARTHER down, at the twenty-third verse, it is written of the same man, after he was lifted out from among the lions,—"And no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God."

The grandeur of the Book of Daniel is not only the sweep of those majestic visions which opened the mysteries of future time, but the vivid portrait it holds before us of a man who has all the springs of his actions in faithfulness to God:—a man so thoroughly forgetful of himself that the one only question which rises in him, when any thing is to be done or suffered, is whether that thing is his Lord's will. If it is, no doubt remains; nothing is to be said or thought about costs or consequences. If it is not, no consequences will justify it.

The probable consequences of our actions are one proper test, among others, for deciding, in doubtful cases, before we act, whether a given course is, or is not, according to God's will; but when that last point is once settled, whether by Scripture, an enlightened conscience, or *any* rightful authority, the expected consequences can

never furnish ground for hesitation. What is right is to be done. What will come of our doing right—whether dens of lions or chairs of state—is not our concern.

Still, the weakness of human virtue makes men more prompt and steadfast in well-doing if they know, beforehand, how it will come out, and that no hurt will be found upon them. God befriends this infirmity by granting the repeated assurance,—sometimes by miracle, sometimes by natural laws of life, and sometimes by tender spoken promises,—that those who honor and trust Him He will honor and defend, bringing out their cause to light and after some lapse of time, however long, in his own way confounding their adversaries. The biography of the Prophet Daniel is radiant all over with bright instances of this Divine vindication. First, he was among the four captive Hebrew children that were taken into the foreign prince's palace and offered dishes of the sacrilegious oppressor's meat and cups of his hot wine; but he purposed in his heart not to touch them, preferring honest pulse and water; and, after ten days' trial, he showed a healthier countenance and a ten times clearer head than all the magicians and astrologers that did eat of the king's meat.

It was three of the same four that would not offer heathen adoration to a golden image,—though princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counsellors, sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces did,—these three preferring the furnace of fire seven times heated; and there, in the red heat, unhurt, finding One walking with them whose form was like the Son of God, so that the fire had no power on their bodies, nor the smell of it passed upon their garments,—while the flames burnt up the barbarians that cast them in.

He dared again to stand before the throne of a capri-

cious and cruel monarch and denounce him to his face with the awful interpretation of his dream,—that he should be driven from his kingdom, and dwell with the beasts of the field, and be wet with the dew of heaven, till he should know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, —not afraid of consequences, and at last wringing from the convicted tyrant that lofty and yet lowly confession of faith, ending, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

The courtly flatteries of Belshazzar could not make the candle of that clear-shining soul pale or flicker an instant: "I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee." He only answered, "*Thou*, O King, art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it."

A third king came, promulgating his arrogant decree that, for thirty days, if any man in the realm should ask a petition of any god or man save of him, he should be cast into the den of lions. "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." The Psalmist says, when the lions hunger they seek their meat from God. The same Hand that feeds them can shut their mouths. And "so Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God."

It is the living power of these inspired narratives that,

under individual instances, they lay open all that wondrous world of human hearts and human life which is the same with us all. Each of these four sorts of hostility to Christian faithfulness has its ever-present examples. 1. The royal meat-dishes and wine-vessels, in the low importunities of the flesh, tempting the senses to excess. 2. The golden image set up on the plains of Dura, in the thousand-fold attractions of outward possession and prosperity, rendered only the more seductive when, as in this history, office and station sanction the lust and ambition of them. 3. The princely court and crown and ceremony of Babylon, over-awing common consciences, in the whole fascination and imposing influence of earthly power, invested with the highest advantages and brilliant paraphernalia of social distinction. And 4. The decree of an idolatrous worship, in everything among us which goes to put man in place of God, man's opinions in place of Gospel-truths, and human fancies for a revealed and justifying faith. We need not use the hard names which describe the extreme indulgences and servitudes of these four formidable passions: we need not say *gluttony*, *avarice*, *sycophancy*, or *infidelity*. Some of us, who are really in danger from the beginnings and secret workings of these desires might then escape the blessing of the warning under the plea that no charge so gross really holds against us. Let us choose moderate words and try to put it home to ourselves, fairly, just as it is. Look at the same four thus:—sins of the appetites, sins of selfish accumulation, sins of inordinate desire for position, sins of religious laxity and negligence:—who will not admit that one or another of the four besets him,—besets him with danger to his pure and holy walking with God,—besets him with all the artful and boundless possibilities of growth, mastery, perdition of the soul?

Over all these perilous tempters we are shown here one steadfast and victorious Master:—religious fidelity. It wears in this saintly Prophet a peculiar charm. It is a fidelity intensified yet without boasting or pretension,—incorruptible without self-confidence, fixed without obstinacy, patient without pusillanimity, invincible in front of men and princes, but humble and docile at the feet of the Lord. For a fidelity like this there is an involuntary and almost universal admiration even among men that fall farthest short of it. So far the best sentiments of human nature second the requirements of our religion. Place a Daniel, an Elijah, a Gideon, or a Joshua before them, and they see, they confess, the stamp of greatness on his spirit. So far the Bible and the soul answer to each other.

The same Divine Hand that has wrought this feeling into the common human heart has woven traces of it into human history. The four successive steps which mark the birth and growth of each great cause, institution, or reformation among men, are these: first, the great truth wakened in the mind of some man or men, in the form of an idea and a faith, by the Spirit from whom all good gifts come; next, the jealous and selfish opposition of worldly interest,—the Pharaohs and Cæsars and Herods, the Nebuchadnezzars and Belshazzars, the Scribes and Pharisees, of society, of the State, and even of the Church,—carrying on a determined warfare with the Light; next, the triumph of fidelity, brave and patient; lastly, the general recognition and confession of the glory and beauty of the faithful life. Only let in time enough after a man sacrifices himself for a true principle, and the common testimony of men will honor him. More than that, it will not effectually and unanimously honor any thing else on earth but such fidelity.

Inspiration itself does not record and mankind do not commemorate the names of any men as really saintly or heroic, save those that fell on evil days, were witnesses against a corrupt generation, lived above their age, and have to wait for after times to acknowledge that no manner of hurt was found upon them because they believed in their God. It is one of the most striking proofs that a righteous God really rules the earth to see this constant reversal of human judgments going on,—the humble exalted, and the rejected canonized. Very often, as we look back, we see the falsely great humbled to a mortifying inferiority on the spot, by some genuine plain soul,—some uninspired successor of these Biblical heroes, —who took counsel only of Heaven;—like Bernard Palissy, a poor but thinking and believing mechanic of France, thrown into the old Bastile in St. Bartholomew days, for his Protestantism. Charles the IXth came to visit and threaten him in the prison, saying to him, "Palissy, I am forced to give you up to death, unless you renounce your religion." "Forced!" answered the triumphant prisoner; "they that force you, King Charles, can not force me. I can die; and so I am free. But you and all your nation can not compel me, simple potter as I am, to bend my knee to an idol or a lie." Everybody knows whence the spirit in that man came, and everybody acknowledges its power.

Men are heard to say, "There are terrible times coming; times of sharper suffering even than these now passing; wider financial distress, bloodier battles, worse divisions, keener privations;—and *then* will be the time for men's hearts to fail." All this may be. We know nothing of the future. But we are not to forget that prosperity is, to most men and women, a harder test of fidelity to Christ than misfortune. Suffering often raises

of itself a spirit of strength; persecution nerves the martyr; peril provokes faith. But after a long period of physical comfort, in an individual life, in a family, in a community, the sense of spiritual realities is less clear; God seems farther off; religion is more a routine and a memory than a vital service heartily rendered from a feeling of present gratitude and necessity. So it seems to me that instead of looking out for dangers that shall imperil men's souls when worse days come, we should be wiser if we were looking for them just where we are, and if in this climate of general indifference and skepticism we watched the growth of those very causes which require the "faithful few" yet to come out and be separate, to set up anew the old banner of the cross, to practice a stricter and holier rule of living, things which, for the sake of pure doctrine and a crucified Saviour's honor, may make a man's foes to be those of his own household. In business, in politics, in company, in families, in schools, the question will have to go forth once more like a dividing sword, "Who is on the Lord's side?" For, after all, much as our habits have changed, the Gospel has not changed; the love of God has not changed: it is as true as it ever was that "He that loveth houses or lands, father or mother, wife or child, more than Christ is not worthy of Him;" and "If a man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

I find a great many persons pleading for mild and liberal exhibitions of Christian conviction. They say, "Let us not be too strict in our social regulations, or too rigid in our religious observances. For, granting that the stricter way has some advantages in the New Testament view, it will repel the sympathies of those we want to conciliate. Our desire is to gain men to our side. If we soften down the stern sanctions of God's law; if we muf-

fle its threatening thunders; if we turn the sharp edge of that sword of the Spirit which says, 'If a man believeth he shall be saved, and if he believeth not he shall be damned;' if we set aside our devout scruples when we are with men of the world, and omit our prayers, or let in a good share of mammon into the conversation and keeping of the Lord's day; if we talk loosely with loose people, and trim our opinions to the breath that blows at the moment; if we stay away from God's house to please the guests that visit us, or the host that we visit, or the company we meet,—why, we shall only do all this hoping to gain larger numbers to religion." They only sacrifice Christ's true religion to make followers of a religion which is not true, and is not Christ's. You never turn worldly men or women to the City of God by going half-way with them to Vanity Fair. There is planted in human nature a respect for thorough sincerity and consistency of character, with contempt of the opposite. God planted it. You, Christian soldier, meet, undoubtedly, the lower part of a worldly man by showing that you can be as worldly as he is: but then you would meet the higher part of him by calmly and steadfastly refusing to do it; and that higher part is very seldom quite dead. Let this man of the world have occasion to ask not who shall be the companion of his lighter hours but who shall manage his estates, who shall vindicate his reputation, or to whom he shall commit the trust of his child when he dies, and you will find that, after all, he leans on the uncompromising conscience.

The greater truth is, we are all servants answerable only for doing declared duties, for confessing Christ before men, and seeking not our own glory, and being found faithful unto death,—not for numbers gained or

lost. He who ordered us to "stand, having our loins girt and our lamps burning" will take care of the consequences. Ours is not to order results, but to do duties.

The prophet stands in just this trial-place of his holy independence. He might have reasoned in just the same strain of sophistry. "Here is a Babylonian court, full of prejudices against the worship of the true God. Let me keep my staunch convictions in the background. Let me meet these Pagan economists half-way. Places are nothing. Postures are nothing. Outward observances are nothing. I can pray in secret. I can keep my devotional feelings to myself, and still God will know my heart. Why should I make my religion needlessly pronounced, peculiar and offensive?" All this he might have said: and who will deny that he would have had a multitude of modern Christians with him? But, would he then have been the sublime figure of faith and witness of Jehovah that he is? Would that fearless face have looked out upon us from "the goodly fellowship of the prophets," noble as any of "the noble army of martyrs"? Would God have condescended to shut the lions' mouths for a servant no braver than that? Nay even the hero-worshippers of this world would have struck his name instantly from their roll. Much more the Captain of our salvation! For "whosoever shall be ashamed of the Son of Man, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of the Father."

"He *kneeled upon his knees*, three times a day;" remembering the reverent custom of his nation, though now in a strange land, he opened his windows in his chamber and prayed "toward Jerusalem." There was no false fear of a "form," no sundering the inward from the outward, no divorcing of the spirit and body of religion

which God had joined together,—"because he believed in his God."

Once more, the special peril of this sort of character is that it becomes conscious of its strength, proud of its independence, and before it is aware, substitutes the human heroism of self-reliance for the holy fidelity of Christ's self-sacrifice. How many high examples of Christian courage have fallen by that cunning temptation,—the humility of the cross vanished! See in Daniel the graceful freedom from that ostentation of conceited and opinionated firmness. He went not into street or palace-court, but, modestly, into his own house. There was just so much public conformity as fidelity and the sacred custom demanded,—no more; the kneeling, the open windows toward Jerusalem: no noisy defiance, no boastful resistance, no aggravating proclamation of his resolve; he "prayed and gave thanks before his God," just "*as he did aforetime.*" Christian fidelity is as meekly dependent on God as it is fearless of His enemies.

Here, then, is the "faithful serving" we pray for in the Collect to-day, the spirit needed by the age, by the Church, by our timid and marketable virtue, by our halting and too unfruitful faith. It is a sad sight;—a man, a woman, called of Christ Jesus to the glory of giving all in joy for Him,—all whose days are degraded to one long eager calculation how to get honor and pleasure for self! Turn back to Him! Take up His cross, and neither fear nor love the world under your feet. The form and fashion of it perisheth. Christ says, in the Gospel, "I seek not Mine own glory"; "Come after Me." "Feed My sheep." We want a more faithful faith. With that, no manner of hurt shall come on the Christian or on the Church, in the fiercest fires. Your

vindication may come slowly but it comes at last. Suffering and tempted men see a form like a Son of God walking with them through the fire. Not "ashamed of Jesus," the Church, which is His household, shall be kept in continual godliness, unhurt, because she believes in her God.

IMPULSE AND REGULATION.

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

"PETER answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water."—*Matt.* xiv. 28.

THE particular request made here by St. Peter is not the principal matter. There is a revelation of character, made indirectly and unintentionally, but all the more accurately for that very unconsciousness on his part, through the language and the whole action of the man.

On an inland sea, exposed to gusts of wind that sweep down with changes of temperature from the surrounding hills, a small ship's company are working their little vessel through a tempestuous and tedious night from the east to the west side of the lake. They are the disciples of Jesus, but their Master is not with them. At sundown, the evening before, after completing in solemn order the miracle that fed the five thousand, He sent His followers on their voyage; and then, making a sanctuary of the hill-top, He withdrew for solitary communion with the Father. He knows, however, what new need of His wonder-working power the night will bring to His weak-hearted followers; and accordingly, always ready to break up His own enjoyment for their comfort, He goes down from the mountain and just at the moment of their sorest peril and terror walks out to them over the waters. Not quite prepared, even yet, for all the

marvels of His mercy, they take His passing figure for another alarm in the unearthly furies of the storm; some ghostly apparition has risen. "It is a spirit." As soon as they hear the reassuring voice through the noises of the waves, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid," they know it, and know Him, and their peace has already begun. Two storms are hushed at once: the waves of their trouble, and the waves of Gennesaret. They remember perhaps the words of their national psalmist: "If He giveth quiet, who then can make trouble?" There are no winds in Galilee fierce enough to frighten them when He who holds the winds in His hands stands by. That one among them who is always first to speak and first to act utters his irrepressible feeling in his venturesome fashion: "Bid me come unto Thee on the water." The rest of the narrative is familiar. Christ says, "Come." Peter undertakes it, but finds himself sinking, and cries out to the Saviour, who catches him calmly in His hand, and explains his failure: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Almost any other occasion would have brought out the same characteristic trait of the man; because he belongs to the class of persons who act without calculation, and are therefore always making spontaneous disclosures of what is uppermost in their minds. Find him where you will, he is an embodiment of impulse. Too eager in showing his love for his Master to deliberate about the manner of showing it; too quick in movement to forecast the difficulties he will have to overcome; and too ardent in the execution of every good purpose that flashes into his thoughts to consider whether he will be able to carry it through, he is always interesting in spite of his irregularity, full of power while the ardor is on, and in the midst of all his inconsistencies consistent in

the intensity of his emotions, and his prevailing desire to do right. Remember that it was such a natural constitution as this that Christ chose, to make out of it an apostle of His Church as effective and successful finally in preaching the Gospel and planting His kingdom as any one of the twelve, and firm as rock. Mistaken men have invested him with a fictitious royalty by making him out a primate of papal power and prerogative at Rome,—which he never was; but he was greater and holier,—he was a primate of hearty penitence and forgiven sin, and so a perpetual encouragement and comfort to every penitent heart here.

We take him, then, to illustrate the difference in Christian character between good intentions and a good life—or more exactly between religious principle and religious regulation. When the Christian life has once been awakened nothing comes oftener to bring discouragement than the disproportion between what we actually accomplish for God and the plans of well-doing that we have previously laid out. Over and over again, we have come out of our morning prayers with bright intentions into the household and out of our houses into the world. Again and again we have seen these visions fade,—oftener than we have seen a clear sunrise degraded into a dismal day. So some simple story of Christlike charity, in a book you are reading, makes you lay the book down with the exclamation,—O this miserably selfish life of mine shall be changed; the selfishness shall be purged out of it; I will inquire out who in my neighborhood most needs my sympathy; and to-morrow, instead of running all day on the errands of my own pleasure, my willing feet shall carry me to the bedside of the sick and poor, and wherever Christ would be sure to be walking if He were

here in His humility! Some searching sentence of the Bible for a moment startles you, and it alters the look of every thing; your heart itself feels like a new thing in your breast. "Henceforth," you say, "this ugly and unsettled relation with my God shall be cleared up; I belong to Him; He so loved me as to give His only-begotten Son to die for me; I shall only be dying forever if I live on as I am living now; I will arise, and go to Him; these few short days that remain shall all be His." When the daylight comes, after you have listened all night to the heavy breathing of a sick child, and the physician tells you the crisis is past, and the precious life is safe, you cry out, "Take me, O God, and take this child, and all I have for thine own service; it is all too little for thine infinite and unmerited love." You look on the healthy faces at your table; you count up your blessings: that very word "blessings" sets you to holier trains of thought, and you resolve that this or that bad habit shall be cut clean off that moment; the unruly tongue with its infernal fire shall be ruled; the peevish temper is too mean and ungrateful to be tolerated in the midst of so many favors from Heaven; the wayward, unhallowed, unfaithful affection shall die. A generous greeting in the street from a rival whom you have slandered shames you into the determination that no envious insinuation shall ever stain your tongue again. In the sanctuary, or in your closet, a vision of a life above ambition and falsehood breaks in upon your soul; and you declare your emancipation from this bondage; you will be the slave of society no longer; you will be independent of men, and dependent only on Him whose cheerful service is perfect freedom. You rise from your knees after prayer, or you go home from the graveyard, and you repeat to yourself sincerely, "The time past is

enough to have done evil, serving myself; Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Re-create and guide me by Thy Spirit, and let no iniquity have dominion over me." It was then that we stood on the unsteady waves with Peter, and seeing for a moment the face of Christ cried to Him, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water."

There are two powers working side by side by which Christ has taught us He means every true Christian life shall move forward, undervaluing neither the one nor the other. One of these is the impelling power, impulse. It is this that comes into play when we form new religious intentions, lay out new plans of usefulness, resolve on some amendment of practice, like the dropping of some bad habit or the setting up of a good one, and take a fresh start on a holier path. This impulsive part of religious character is indispensable. St. Peter was entirely right in his outset, "Bid me come to Thee on the water."

The other, then, is the regulating power. It is this that *keeps alive* the life that has been awakened, fulfils the good intentions, sustains the interest that has been created, brings the plans of usefulness to good effect, and so prevents the impulse from dying out. Impulses spring up in the region of feeling. Their continuance, regulation and practical results depend on the conscience and the will. The impulse may be the offspring of a momentary emotion, which may be excited by almost any transient sight or sound or some untraceable succession of thoughts in the mind. But to support it, to make any thing of it but a waking dream or a swelling and then sinking breath of wind,—a sense of *duty* must come in; a law must be acknowledged, and the irregular propensities must be brought in subjection to it. Not only must

the "promise" mentioned in to-day's Collect kindle us but that which is *commanded* must be done.

When Peter, after his brave beginning, saw the wind boisterous, and was afraid, and began to sink, he reached just this transition-point between impulse and principle. Some persons reach it as soon as a threatened danger passes by, the alarming disease turns, or the sorrow is healed by time; others reach it as soon as they go from retirement into scenes of social stimulus or ordinary business; others of different temperament, when they *leave* society where their moral health was comparatively safe, and turn morbid or indolent or dull from being left alone with themselves; others when they have a chance to make dishonest money; others when they go out of Church; others only when a provoking speech stings a peculiarly sensitive, proud, or suspecting temper. However it comes this is the real test that proves Christian character, of what sort it is; whether it is the gossamer stuff that a boisterous wind scatters, or the very life of a new-born soul, planted and grounded in that principle of duty, where heart, conscience, understanding and will bind all their strength together and have the Rock of Ages for their anchor.

So in the great historical life of mankind, where God overrules the individual notions and wills of man and carries forward His own mighty plans, sudden revolutions and violent reforms represent the impulsive power where a nation wakes to a new sense of right and starts on a new career of liberty. All the phenomena of such an epoch are so startling and the effects are so imposing that we look back to it and dwell upon it as if it were the only good. But if we look closer we shall see that the blessings of a steady condition, of established law, of fixed customs and a stable order are quite as impor-

tant in the long run. The conservative or regulating force is what abides and, taking up new ideas or new privileges, shapes them into permanent institutions and hands the blessings down from one generation to another. If there were nothing but impulses or sudden starts in history there would be nothing but anarchy: and if there were none of these, only regulation, there would finally be nothing but despotism. And thus the life of the redeemed race at large is only a copy of the life of the individual Christian man, written out in larger letters.

We turn to Holy Scripture, which is at once the law-book, the liturgy and the "promise" of the race, and there all this is plainly confirmed. When Christ comes, in the midst of the ages, He produces the one great spiritual revolution where so much of the outer part of religion, which had been a preparation and prophecy of Him, passes away. The waiting world cries out to Him when He appears, "Bid me come to Thee on the water." But look again, carefully, and you will see how much of the old Faith survives. He declares Himself that every jot of the law must be fulfilled, not destroyed. The regulating power of the outward divine institution, the visible church and its ordinances, is never lost sight of, even among the miracles and sanctities of the new "law of the spirit of life" in Christ Jesus.

Now, how is it within us? As the just balance or right proportioning of character is one of the most difficult attainments of the Christian, it comes about that we are apt to see two classes of disciples, one illustrating impulse and the other regulation: one of the school of St. James, always correct, guarded, deliberate, consistent; and if not soaring very high in religious joy never sinking very low in despair or shame; inspiring confi-

dence rather than admiration, and respect more perhaps than love:—and another of the school of St. Peter, prompt in sympathy, eager to start new measures, enthusiastic at the opening of good enterprises, wrought upon by those social and striking demonstrations which stir the blood; now ready to cast themselves into the sea to get nearer to their Master, one moment ardently refusing to let Him wash their feet,—but the moment after, when He says, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," as ardently exclaiming, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head,"—and, if tempted in some wretched hour of anger or fear to deny Christ, melting into tears of bitter penitence afterwards at a look from His countenance. We find these two classes everywhere. Both of them are owned, at least as learners, in the one great school of Christ. Both are as far removed from the unrepenting, unconverted and indifferent, as the living are from the dead. But, though the Great Fold of the True Shepherd is Catholic enough to embrace both classes, yet they are the best Christians and most faithfully represent their Master in the world who join the two together,—hastening to go out and meet Christ in the thankful impulse of a fervent spirit, and yet abiding with Him ever afterwards, by patient continuance in His service.

I imagine some earnest spirit, heartily desiring a complete and steadfast consecration, may inquire, how shall it be? How shall I turn the ardent impulse of penitent faith that yearns in me, even now, and cries, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee on the water," into an even, trustful, consistent piety? Walking daily at His side, and doing His will, the Gospel which has in all its parts as much to say of the building up and establishing of Christian character as of its beginnings, an-

swers, You shall do it by leaving no good impulse to grow cold or waste in a neglected sentiment but by embodying it immediately in its corresponding action; by clothing the purpose in the deed; by going on the errand of duty where your closet-prayer directed you; by making the sacrifice for Christ which in some better hour He unfolded to your vision in its glory; by cutting off at once that secret or social habit of false living or vain pretension or self-indulgence, which will be sure to sway you back again from all your better visions unless you take it firmly by the throat and slay it before you: in other words, by Christian *regulation.* You may think you can live on religiously enough in a new life without confessing Christ before men; but you never found that thought in your Bible, where every word on the subject repeatedly and solemnly contradicts it. You may think you can grow in goodness while neglecting sacrament and sanctuary and all the blessed framework of the Church that stays up and shelters our vagrant, faltering impulses; but that is only the impious conceit that you are wiser than the Maker and Saviour who appointed these public ordinances for you; and sooner or later failures that you can not account for will be the penalty of your presumption.

And for our encouragement when we seem to fail let it be enough to see what was done for the faith which though small was sincere, humble, and sought to come nearer to Christ. "When they were come into the ship the wind ceased. And they came and worshipped Him saying, Of a truth, Thou art the Son of God!"

Steadfastness will come as you are really planted in Christ. There will be no firm and even walking till you walk with Him. The closer your life is in communion and devotion to Him who is the same yesterday and to-

day and forever, the surer every step will be. He comes over the sea. It is His hand that holds up Apostles and the weakest of His followers alike. It is the reaching out of your hand of faith to Him that will turn impulse into constancy and make even "the troublesome waves of the world" a pavement and a pathway to perfect peace.

THE PERSONAL ELEMENT IN CHRISTIAN POWER.

Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

"Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand."—*Gal.* vi. 11.

The first impression probably is that this clause, standing at the head of the Epistle for this Sunday, is comparatively unimportant. In what goes before it St. Paul presents with all the energy and comprehensiveness of his inspiration a kind of summary of the Gospel he preached. He tells the Galatians, he tells the whole Church how they are justified and saved, setting in the clearest light the spiritual doctrine of forgiveness and eternal life by Jesus Christ as against the doctrine of salvation by the artificial method of legal regulation. In the midst of this majestic exposition of the principles of the new kingdom of the cross he puts the Christians at Galatia in mind of a fact strictly personal: "Ye see how large a letter,"—or rather *in how large letters or characters*,—"I have written unto you with mine own hand." By that personal reference he means to win for the great evangelic truths he is teaching a more cordial hearing and a readier reception.

It has been supposed that some disorder of the eyes made it painful for the apostle to write. Earlier in this Epistle where he tries to gain these childish Galatians by a recital of his own sorrows for them, he praises their

affection by saying, "I bear you record that if it had been possible ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me." In the adjoining sentence he speaks of the "temptation in his flesh," for which they neither despised nor rejected him, but entertained him "as an angel of God." Doubtless the use of the pen or style was costly to his comfort. All the better if it only helps in the least degree to draw them, through his Christlike sacrifice in their behalf, nearer to Christ Himself. Suppose he had not been so thoughtful; suppose he had just followed the custom and had dictated his letter to an amanuensis,—every truth recorded, every appeal for fidelity, every part of the intellectual demonstration of the doctrine would have stood there just as it stands now. Nothing of the literal contents of the message he was bidden to deliver would have been lost. The edge of dialectic discrimination, between law and Gospel, would have been just as sharp-cut and clean. The theological system would have been just as solid and full. The apostle, when the last salutation had been worded, and the benediction of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" had closed the document, might have taken the parchment from his secretary, read it all over, and seen nothing omitted from what had been given him to send forth, feeding the flock of God. And yet one thing would not have been there. The Galatian reader, and we here, would have missed the sign-manual of personal interest and personal sympathy so vividly and yet so delicately stamped on the whole face of the manuscript in the painstaking writing of his "own hand." There is the additional power of personal feeling and personal character. There is the *special* force, the sympathetic, persuading, convincing force, of what is personal to the man. Very carefully he tells us at

the outset that the Church and the Gospel of God stand in their own independent strength, indebted to no preacher and no human gifts, not even to an apostle. "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after men. For I neither received it of men, neither was I taught it but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ." And yet he is conscious of a trust in his own personality. When other reasons seem to be exhausted he cries, in a passion for his cause which sweeps all false modesty away, "Behold, *I, Paul*, say it unto you"; he recounts his perils; he entreats by his persecution; he remonstrates by his old age; he reasons from his own conversion; he rejoices that the Churches of Palestine glorified God in him; and then he finishes one of the most evangelical of his strains of inspired eloquence by resorting to a motive personal to himself: "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand."

Whatever stress may be rightly laid on truth in the abstract, on formal propositions, commandments, systems of divinity, there is further room for the play of that *special* principle of personal association and personal attachment. It is something wrought into the body, the mind, and the spirit of the man. The gift is the main thing; but it does make a real difference, after all, whose hand brings it and puts it into our own hand. The secret value is not what we say in words; it is not in our specific actions, much less in our professions. Terms are not competent to define it. Science has never analyzed it. Yet there it is:—the personal quality, a power that is perpetually and mightily at work wherever men are, for or against the Love and Truth of God. It is the thing too which more than all else makes people love one another, unites them in companionships, and colors society. We are drawn to some good things and

weaned from some that are bad, we are shamed from meanness and repent of sin, our will is braced, our energies are quickened, we are led up nearer to our high ideal of duty, because some person adds to the efficacy of bare ideas an influence that lies in his own separate character. It is made over from one to another,—made to tell,—by his looks, his gestures, his voice, by all those mysterious channels of communication which *transmit* the hidden life of the soul,—by a man's writing with "his own hand" instead of another's when he is so weary or weak or blinded that every syllable costs him trouble. No human nature, however exalted it may imagine itself, is beyond the reach of this power. The solemn-minded apostle, never wandering a moment from his one purpose, so filled with the single object of his calling that he says, "It is no more I that live, but Christ liveth in me,"—"All things are loss for Christ,"—"I determined not to know any thing among you" but Christ,—"I am ready to be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith" in Him,—this man understands perfectly that, *besides* all this, in the whole work of his ministry, writing, preaching, travelling, agonizing, in his daylight labors for men and his dungeon-dreams of Heaven, there is yet that about *him*, the *person Paul*, —lodged in the fingers of his right hand and his dim eyes—that he must not fail to bring into the service of "the cross." He sits there lonely in his prison-house at Rome, the soldiers of the Emperor watching him. The beasts are in the amphitheatre near by, where a Christian may be tossed in any day, growling for their meat. It is no matter. Far away by the Euxine Sea are some scattered groups of Galatian believers, timid and imperilled sheep among the wolves, his own brethren in the Lord. They are falling backward, and falling apart

in sects and parties. He will write to them. If he could go and see them face to face he would, for the personal power would help more effectually to save and bless them. But he can use it in another way. There is something of it in his hand, and that hand also is Christ's, whose own hand was nailed to "the cross" for them. And so with the chained "hand,"—the iron likely enough chafing his wrists, he wrote, "Paul—unto the Churches of Galatia,—grace be to you, and peace!"

Mere abstract truth is not sufficient to change men's motives, to rouse their hearts or to save their souls. The Gospel is not delivered to us as a mere string of propositions, however striking, however true, however inspired, —and we may be thankful it is not. For, no such treatise, law-book, moral philosophy, "Aids to Reflection," or "Whole Duty of Man,"—call it a Gospel or by any other name,—would ever have led the Race from darkness to light, or lifted it up from death to life. As a matter of history, that never happened. True enough, we have our Gospel, our Christianity *through* a Book. It is a "Word of Life," but it is more. The Word is "made flesh" in the Person Christ. *He* is the Gospel. It was not Christianity that regenerated mankind and changed the face of the earth; it was Christ. We have much more than a Book. We have even *that* through living men; it brings before us living characters,—men whose personality was taken up by the Holy Ghost and made part of the vehicle of Revelation. I take it that what was personal to each one of the twelve men that were grouped about our Lord was put there in order to give the Glad Tidings of His Life to mankind in a twelvefold shape, so that it would be "twelve manner of fruits" for the healing of many nations. Peter's impulsiveness, John's ardor, Philip's curiosity, Matthew the publican's

sagacity, the square-dealing of James, every peculiarity amongst them all was just as much a part of the apparatus of Revelation as the words of the Beatitudes, or the stone-tables of the law. Even the doubting temperament of Thomas was turned to account, and intentionally, for the confirmation of the faith in countless minds naturally hard and slow to believe, like him. The Bible, all through it, is quick and brilliant with these personal tokens. Take Old Testament or New. Is there nothing but literal law and invisible grace? From end to end almost it is a biography or a picture-gallery of persons,—a cluster of "large letters" written by persons about persons, and sent to persons. Open it at almost any point, we are in the company of living characters. The message comes to us as alive and in action. The law of personal association operates through it, in innumerable ways. One reason why the Scripture is read to so little purpose is that in the handling and preaching of it so little is made of this feature of its construction. Our pulpit is more abstruse than any prophet, psalmist, evangelist, or apostle, of the Bible, —far more than the Saviour Himself, whose discourses move before us like processions of people that we know and have seen. A system of divinity for instance contains a chapter on the omniscience of the Deity. Does it help you or me to take in what it tries so elaborately to teach, as when we hear the solitary outcast Hagar, thirsting and faint, by the fountain in the wilderness, husbandless and yet not a widow, straining her hungry child to her breast, looking to the sky and saying, "*Thou God seest me?*" Would the Psalms be what they are, and have been, for twenty-eight hundred years, and ever will be, if there were no "David and all his trouble" there, singing them? We might better spare, it seems to me, a good portion of the furniture of Moses' taber-

nacle than the child Moses at the river-bank with his Hebrew nurse,—or pages of Proverbs than the alabaster box of ointment.

The truth is, there is both a divine and a human ingredient in the Scriptures, and the one is as truly of God as the other. We have in it "the mind of the Spirit," but we have it through human traits and organs of men, one by one, made just as we are made. Why is it that people meeting and parting take each other *by the hand*, as if that member were in some way a sign of their common humanity? Why is one of the truest of English poets sure of his answer from the reader's heart when he traces the sunbeam that steals through the crevice of the window-shutter and falls on "the dead baby's hand"? St. Paul too was a poet. The hand is the sign of himself, and is itself a preacher. Not only does this law run through the volume which reveals God, making the Bible a far more precious and gracious gift than it could have been if it were only a scroll of dogma, but it is found to lie at the roots of the one great Fact and Doctrine on which the Church rests, and out of which the Bible is unrolled; viz., the Incarnation of our Lord. What is this "Word made flesh"? Is it not the Infinite God, too far off to be otherwise ever fully trusted or fervently loved, taking a human personality? He enters into a personal form with us, in order to *give* Himself more entirely, more intimately, to His children. The scholastic theologians on one side and the rationalists on the other have missed it, but this is really what distinguishes the Gospel from all the old and new religions of the world, as much as it practically raises *Christendom* above all heathen civilization and Gentile morality. We have a human Saviour, a Divine Brother. What modern unbelief runs down to, after all, as its last

and logical conclusion, is the loss of the Person God. When we come to the root and marrow of the matter, the battle between skepticism and faith will be fought over this issue, Is there a personal God? A prayerless world is only a world without a God living among us,—a world orphaned and bereaved of Him by its self-conceit. We shall have it sure enough when we have a pantheistic philosophy, nature without worship, law without love, Heaven without sympathy, scholarship without reverence or wonder, will and senses without faith,—and then sorrow unutterable without consolation. Let this go on, and sooner or later, though pride may bear up the courage of here and there a philosopher, the human heart will be sure to wake up again to its hunger, and then finding himself without a Protector or a Home man can only "wrap his mantle about his face, creep like a wounded hare into a corner, and sob to death." The coming of the Son of God in the Son of Mary gives us a personal Father. The Father is known when the Son is known. "Emmanuel," with its literal meaning, is a name that sums up the blessing of the Gospel and is itself the restoration of faith. The birth at Bethlehem, with all its personal tokens, gives the upward-looking heart a God to love and worship, with all the sympathizing features of humanity in His face,—the tears and groans and bleedings of a man in His agony. In the Messianic prophecies, what one expression gives a more vivid sense of the weight of the world's sin crushing into the soul of its Deliverer than the phrase, "His countenance was marred more than the countenance of any man?" There were occasions too in Christ's intercourse with His followers when, beyond any thing that could be described in words, His personal soul went into His manner, motions, glances, yielding marvellous effects.

His "Follow Me," His "Daughter be of good cheer," His look at Peter, His woes upon the Pharisees, His aspect before the trained soldiers of the imperial army, sent out to arrest Him, are instances. Remember that for the three years of His public ministry the entire following of Christ was due to the attraction of His Person, drawing and binding close about Him the men and women who came, one by one, heard Him call their names, and were *His* thenceforth forever. The divine effluence flows from His form on every side, as He walks among the sick and crippled, the dumb and dying, healing as easily as He breathes. Since His ascension, in every land and period, Christian piety has been vigorous in proportion to the attachment and devotion to the Saviour's person. It is the vital aroma of the best hymns of the ages. It sheds the holiest unction into the most memorable sermons. It quenched the violence of martyr-fires. It kindled light in the shadows of the catacombs. We know absolutely nothing of any "Christianity" not thus embodied in a living Lord. In Bible and history the believers who have most sublimely conquered death have been those that lived in the clearest consciousness of a personal friendship with their Head. Heaven itself hereafter, all wrapped in mystery otherwise, has this for its one satisfying certainty. "We know not," says St. John, "what we shall be, but we know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." This is not visionary sentiment. It is the noble passion for reality. No wonder St. Paul, with his gentle manliness, heroic in his tenderness as he is in his strength, should put every personal power into the celebration of such a Saviour, writing "with his own hand."

If there is a personal power like this in the Faith of Christ at all, we are not Christ's true followers till we have it and use it. Who amongst us has yet put into

his own daily living all the faith, half the faith, he confesses in his creed? To how many of us who go to church, patronize religious institutions, and feel affronted if denied the *name* of Christian men, is that frequent phrase of the apostle,—"Christ formed within you"—a reality? Institutions will not save. Proxy religion, professional religion, pulpit religion, social religion, will not save. It wants your own self. Public Christianity does not substitute itself for private character, but is fed and formed from it. Society seems to be wanting some strong tide of spiritual life,—a new impulse from on high,—a fresh breath from the hills of God. Other forces roll on with accelerating and accumulating energy. In all other departments of action men lay hold of great interests *with their own hands.* The eye is keen; the pursuit is swift; the end is definite. How is it here? What new lives should we be living to-morrow if all the nominal religion that floats loosely as mist in our minds were suddenly condensed, so as to give a practical and controlling direction to our conduct! What old ways would have to be dropped! What new work would have to be done! How would our own households look on amazed! In the Gospel Christ has commanded us, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." You believe the Gospel; what precise meaning do you put on that order? We have come once more to the House of God, and now are going out. Which of us has come in and goes out in a personal communion, face to face, with God, holding the promises, doing the service, with his own hand? Which of us will return this week to business, to study, to housework, to society, with new personal purposes, more truly Christ's follower, more thoroughly in earnest in keeping this world under foot, and so using it for God as to mount up by it to Heavenly Places?

ACHOR.

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

"And I will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope."—*Hosea* ii. 15.

"Achor" means "trouble." In the language that God used when there was not much writing signal events often took the place of books; the places where they happened became prominent chapters of a visible revelation; and the names of those places, starting a thousand sacred associations in the mind of the people, were like the common terms which express lessons of truth for the life of man. Points of natural scenery were turned into historic ciphers and geography into a chronicle. Seven hundred years before this prophet was delivering his message to his guilty nation, and amidst his terrible rebukes wrote down this promise for her from God, "I will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope," a spot of sunken earth between two hills of Judæa had suddenly been made a vivid sign of warning,—a kind of prophet of judgment in itself, and stood there with that stern admonition on its lips, ages afterwards. Israel had only just arrived on the borders of the land of promise. The clear commands of their Lord and Leader, the humiliating discipline of the wilderness, the "forty years" to "try and prove them what was in their heart," the covenants,—all were as fresh upon them as the pre-

cepts of Christ and the discipline of life and the gracious helps of the Church are to you and me. Among other explicit prohibitions, mercifully meant to save them from shame and sin, they were forbidden to take to their private possession from among the spoils of their constant wars with the Pagan usurpers of the soil any tokens or materials of the enemy's idolatrous ritual. In the sacking of one miraculously captured city, Jericho, a Jewish soldier had snatched and secreted some of these accursed articles. Jehovah was watchful of His people's purity, and jealous of His own honor. Suddenly, in the next fight, the men of Israel, after a well-planned attack and a carefully calculated force, were strangely smitten before the men of Ai and routed, and their hearts "melted and became as water." What could be the meaning of it? The elders sat down with torn garments and the dust of mortification on their heads; their great general was disheartened; it was a dark day "till eventide." "Alas, O Lord, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan? . . . . Would to God we had been content to dwell on the other side! . . . . All the Canaanites shall hear of it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?" This was Joshua's miserable cry. But there was a meaning in it. There is always a meaning when, in a national struggle, that which seems the stronger is repulsed by the weaker. There is always a meaning in it when, in an individual experience, an unexpected failure disappoints a plausible scheme. God knew what to do "for His great name." He said to Joshua, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned; they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them; for they have taken of the accursed thing, and stolen, and dissembled also. *Therefore* the

children of Israel could not stand before their enemies." Directions were then given for the detection and punishment of the offender. After he had suffered the lawful penalty for his crime, and the profane stuff for which he forfeited his life had been burnt in the valley, as they raised a heap of stones over his body they named him "the troubler of Israel," "and the name of that place," says the narrative, "was called the valley of Achor unto this day." That "day" was lengthened out till, seven centuries after, when another inspired seer is lifting the curtain of Israel's still later future, he takes up the old name to signify the new sorrow, the greater sacrifice and the sublimer deliverance to come. Every Jew would understand the historic allusion. "I will give her," saith the Lord, "the valley of Achor for a door of hope."

Here is a child of God brought up into a Christian inheritance; rescued from the Egypt of bondage to an ancestral depravity; baptized, as in the cloud and in the sea; led every step of the way; hearing the voice of the commandments; refreshed by palm-groves and fountains; drinking water from rocks; finding springs that were bitter at first running with sweet water afterwards; fed with bread which came down from Heaven and never grew in any grain of earthly harvest fields; defended from enemies; spared so long;—yet, after all, here in the large place of fountains and fruits seizing, hiding, holding fast the accursed thing. It is the ever-repeated temptation and sin—unlawfully appropriating the world, plundering for self, dissembling with conscience, disobeying God. The only way out of this guilty entanglement is by some penitential, sacrificial "trouble." The only "door of hope" is some "valley of Achor."

Or, later, there has been perhaps an entering in, and

then a falling away, in this Israel-heart. You have found a place in the "good land," of the Church. Household altars have been set up. You have accepted the covenants, and kept the feasts. You have worn your Leader's name. But months or years of prosperity and comfort, surrounding idolatries in society and business, with the Tempter always watching, have done for your weak will what seven prosperous and headstrong centuries, with bad examples and seductive Gentile mysteries, did for the Hebrews. Indifference has crept again over the better life. Your zeal has grown cold. You are negligent of ordinances but prompt at every social festival; you are ready and animated at pleasure-seeking but reluctant and dull at your prayers; other books are more read than the only Book of Life; the consciousness of loss and change begins to rankle, with an uneasy sense of wrong; the round of religious duties is hurried heartlessly through; corruption and degradation are going on. You are where Israel was when God put the fiery message upon His prophet's lips: the music of the mirth and the feast begins to ring hollow; the vines and the fig-trees are withering; the trembling hands of this false, vain bride begin to feel after her sin-stained ear-rings and jewels, to cast them away. Then speaks the Lord. This backsliding soul shall not fall utterly and die. I will win her back and save her though it be with the terrible scourge of humiliation, with arms of chastisement, with caresses that are stings of pain. She must go to deeper bitterness and wretchedness first, and thence, through that, back to hope and peace. It *must* be, for otherwise there can be no peace, no hope, for her. So with these rough but gracious endearments "I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness." It will be only false and delusive to offer her consolation here in her sins. But

when she is there, in the wilderness, solitary, hungry, penitent, with naked head and bleeding feet, I will speak comfortably to her. *From thence*, out of this barren interval of fasting and self-abasement I will give her vineyards of fruit again. I will *trouble* her with wretchedness that she may afterwards find that godly sorrow to be full of the seeds of peaceable fruits. Shut in there in the sharp notch, in sincere repentance, between fear and shame, she shall find "the valley of Achor a door of hope," and "when she feels herself forgiven she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

It is true of the first beginnings of the Christian life, and of its subsequent recovery from decline and coldness; there must be some suffering as the narrow door by which the imperilled and straitened soul passes through into liberty and rest. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life."

But it is just as true of most of our richest gains, our noblest advancements, in all spiritual clearsightedness and strength, that they are reached through pain or privation. It very rarely happens that we receive what we particularly need without being obliged to give up what we particularly prize. If the sacrifice is not laid upon us voluntarily by ourselves it has to be laid on by a hand more merciful than our own, and more concerned in our salvation. Dives can have the purple and fine linen if he pleases; but that is *all* he has, unless out of his ample estate he is willing to scatter blessings about him, by gifts to God and to His Church and to His poor. No high and calm communion of the soul with Heaven, no wise offerings for religious light, no great gifts of spiritual wisdom or victory, for him,—as long as he only saves, and counts, and stores away, for himself, and his own

children! The circle of selfish interests must be broken through. Some change or other that has pain in it has to usher in the blessing of a closer walk with God. If you depend too entirely on the excitements of society then the vanity or the ambition, those outstretched hands by which you gather in these false stimulants, must be struck down. That is the meaning of the bodily infirmity that shuts you into your own home, or the loss of property that strips you of your ornaments, or the family misfortune that unseats you from the throne of admiration and influence where you reigned once with flatterers at your feet. You might go on praying for the continuance of all the pleasure and the pomp, not knowing what you asked; and if God had had no better thing in store for you, verily you might have had your reward. The daughter of Herodias may have danced till her beauty faded. Pilate and Festus and Felix may have all kept their places and salaries. The rich man was protected from the contagion of Lazarus's sores and went on faring sumptuously every day. We know that they all died and that after death is the Judgment. What we want to know of ourselves and of those we love is that though they were dead yet shall they live. *That* can only be by faith: and therefore faith cries submissively, "Thy will be done; come whatever forms of suffering that will ordains; come solitude, neglect, sharp economy where once was plenty; come bereavement and the memory of beloved faces vanished; come all bleak winds and blow; come dark days and brood; come aching nights and miserable mornings; come all rough ministers of God's ordaining! Better the valley of Achor, which is trouble, now, than the valley of Hinnom which is utter death and "destruction from the presence of the Lord," by and by; no matter what are the hard hands

which lead me into barren places, they are the "allurings" of Him who is the Chief among ten thousand in His goodness, and who means to bring me out thence into immortal purity and peace with Himself where His banner over me shall be perfect love. As all the world is made for its Maker, as all history is made for the kingdom of Christ, as all affairs are carried on under God's providence in the final interest of that kingdom, so all the ordinary operations of this law,—that trouble is the price of power,—out in the regions of men's natural life are intended to illustrate and familiarize this deeper lesson, of the renewing of the inner man, as it is again and again laid down in the Gospel. Almost every great estate had for its founder some diligent, earnest person who ate a spare diet, took short sleep, and went without many things that he liked; and this low place was the door to his success. Trace back the signal causes, institutions, reformations, and you will find they came up from a wilderness: they were in dungeons and on scaffolds, destitute, afflicted, tormented: some painful revolution bore them; some costly blood or tears baptized them; some brave, patient man or woman had a troublesome life, stood alone, was ridiculed or hated, for them. They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment; they wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth,—not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Most of the monuments which mark off the real progress of the Race are raised on fields of agony, and have men's blood and bones at the bottom of them:—the blood of heroes being the seed of free commonwealths as the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church. These are the valleys of Achor which are hollowed out all over the world. From one side of the globe to another, from the begin-

ning to the end, the glory of the earth, the openings of its everlasting hope, are its valleys of trouble.

But, glorious as they are, they are only faint types of one greater Sacrifice, perfect and sufficient. Human in everything beside, Christ is most completely human in this, that His way to His final majesty lies through the humiliations of pain. How true that beautiful form of words is, in the office for the visitation of the sick: "For He Himself went not up to joy but first He suffered pain; He entered not into His glory before He was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ, that we may rise again from death and dwell with Him." From Gethsemane to Calvary was the one true valley of Achor—and without that the others would never have been doors of immortal hope. So says the apostle, "For it became him, *for whom are all things*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."

Shrink less then from pain than from the sin that it is intended to cure. The soul that sinneth, without repentance and faith, it shall die. Go down freely into the valley of repentance and humility,—and you will not pass into the valley of the shadow of the second death.

CHRIST THE DIVINE WITNESS OF OUR SECRET HOURS.

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

"NATHANAEL saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel."—*St. John* i. 48, 49.

THE fig-tree, in Eastern climates, covers itself with a thick mass of foliage; and, as the branches arch themselves off from the trunk and drop their extremities toward the ground, a kind of circular tent is sometimes fashioned, having these heavily leaved boughs for its roof and sides. Under this green enclosure the retirement of any one who wished to screen himself from observation would be almost as complete as within the walls of a house. Nathanael, retiring and yet constant in his piety, appears to have taken one of these leafy closets as a sanctuary for his communion with God. Some work of faith, at any rate, this "Israelite without guile" must have done there, such that he would remember it;—perhaps it was the great comprehensive consecration of a renewed heart which is the most decisive act in the life of any man that makes it, and leaves an impression that can never be effaced not only on his memory but his character. While he was thus sacredly engaged, supposing himself to be hidden from every human eye,

Christ has seen him, recognized his holy employment, read the open page of that guileless heart, and, when they afterwards meet, is ready to pronounce an infallible judgment on the whole attitude and quality of his soul. Whatever his action was, it was one of those representative actions in which the whole inward man comes out and stands revealed. The circumstances were evidently such, either as to the distance of Jesus from the spot or some other local condition, that this knowledge on the part of Christ could have been had only by some supernatural means. So that there arises an instantaneous conviction in Nathanael's mind, resting on grounds known only to himself, that this new-coming teacher and seer on the banks of the Jordan is the Messiah foretold by the old prophets. He goes, at present, no further than that. What kind of a Kingdom that King will build, what kind of a work He will do, what the Gospel is that this unrivalled Rabbi will proclaim, —all this is beyond his knowledge. One thing only he knows and feels; this he declares with all the intense earnestness of his spirit, let the consequences be what they may. This wonderful Master of nature, who sees where human eyes can not see, who knows hearts through and through at a glance, is not merely a man among men. He is more than that. "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." Already that which Christ afterwards mentioned as one of the marvellous effects of His coming had begun to be realized: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known." "That which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops."

This happened just at the opening of the Saviour's public ministry. It was one of those few, memorable

incidents, near Bethabara, through which, as if through gateways of glory, the real character and Messiahship of this Divine Stranger who had now begun to walk among men were suddenly disclosed. John the Baptist had just uttered his startling exclamation, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" Think what the appalling impression of those words would have been, if they had been applied to any human teacher and reformer, though he were the greatest and wisest that ever surprised or instructed mankind! Then follows the brief testimony to the miraculous facts of the baptism at the Jordan, where the voice of the Father pronouncing His benediction on the Son, and the presence of Christ in the water, and the visible descent of the Spirit upon Him, all so clearly demonstrate the distinction of the Three Persons and the Oneness of their Divinity. After this come a few graphic accounts of Christ's first introduction to the men who forthwith bound themselves to His Person and His cause, as His life-long disciples and apostles. Elsewhere the Baptist compares his own relation to Jesus to that of the Bridegroom's friend at the marriage. Here He performs the proper duty of that character, presenting the Bride, in the persons of these first members of the Church, to their Lord and Head. Two disciples, first, hear Him speak, follow Him, and when He turns and says to them, "Come and see," they do come, and do see what the world had never seen before; and they abide with Him not that day only but forever and forever. Then we are told, with all the simplicity of a most artless narrative, how one of the two, Andrew, findeth his own brother, Simon Peter, and, without the slightest shadow of uncertainty makes to him the august announcement, "We have found the Messiah!" How wonderfully unobtrusive and

noiseless are these beginnings of that mighty movement of Christ's Gospel and Kingdom which has yet to draw the world into its train, and make kings and empires bow at the name of the Nazarene! How silently the eternal glory of Heaven glides into the affairs and institutions of us men, to regenerate and redeem them! How unlike the loud machinery, the sensational and dramatic parade, the emotional excitements, with which the popular religion of the day lifts its voice, striving and crying in the streets! A few common men, of a common rank in life, busy about their common occupations, looked up and saw Jesus of the village of Nazareth. Without asking for credentials or pedigree or plan of operations or scheme of organization, without misgiving or fear or doubt, speaking as if they expected of course to be believed, they turned to their neighbors and said, in the calm tone of an unchangeable faith, We have found THE ONE for whom all these ages have been preparing and waiting; we have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus, "the Saviour." Without a trace of fanatic excitement they laid down the labors they lived by, and moved away on another errand, leaving houses and lands and kindred behind them, till that errand proved to be the conversion of nations to the Cross.

Again, it is almost impossible to read what is written in this passage about Nathanael, without observing the analogy between what is said here at the opening of the Gospel and what is written at the opening of the Old Testament of the Law, in the Book of Genesis. It is very striking; the two portions of Scripture represent the reigning principles of the two dispensations, each by a typical occurrence on its threshold. There, at the Garden of Eden, man, a transgressor, conscious of

guilt, hides under the leaves of a tree to escape the punishment he deserves and dreads, and there the eye of the Almighty searches him out with a summons to judgment. Here, at the introduction of the Gospel of reconciliation and forgiveness, just where the Lamb of God appears to take the world's sin away, man seeks the same covering not to hide himself from the Lord God, but rather to draw near to Him and commune with Him; and here the same searching eye discovers him, not for rebuke, but for encouragement and blessing. "Adam sewed the leaves of the fig-tree together to hide his shame. Christ saw Nathanael in his voluntary and devout retirement under the fig-tree and proclaimed him an Israelite indeed in whom there is no shame needing to be hid. We witness the two characteristic motive-powers of the two parts of Revelation, both necessary, each divinely appointed in its place,—the terror of the law, alarming and rousing the conscience, and the attraction of grace moving and melting the heart. Not a jot passes from the law till all is fulfilled, because conscience burns in us with its perpetual fire, and in his weakness and self-love every man needs to know that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Yet none the less are we Christians to be mindful that we live under the new dominion of mercy, where no faintest movement of faith is forgotten and no retiring act of holy obedience is unnoticed or unrewarded. "Jesus said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee."

Unfolding now the practical truth that lies only a little way beneath the surface of these words we divide it into its two natural branches,—what it teaches us respecting Christ who spake them, and what it teaches respecting the religious character of the man to whom they were spoken.

I. First, there is to be found in that startling disclosure of Christ to Nathanael an indication of our Lord's divinity. Leave a moment the trite and well-trod method by which it has been so often attempted to force into the understanding the mysterious truth that Christ is God, and try a simpler way. Jesus stands before the world with this stupendous and unanswerable appeal to our trust and adoration as more than man: He alone of all the generations from the creation to this day, He alone of all the millions of minds that have lighted up the world with intelligence, has the direct and inexplicable power of reading all men's hearts and thoughts and hidden experience, through and through. To each one of us, referring to every passage of our past life, those that we should be most reluctant, or most ashamed, to uncover, He might say just as He said to Nathanael, "When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." The leaders of thought, the masters of men, the philosophers and lawgivers, the inventors and discoverers, have never been equal to this. Genius, learning, wisdom, has never done this. If the most remarkable of them had ever pretended to do it they would have been set down at once as but miserable conjurors and jugglers, playing on the superstitions of credulous people with the arts of magic. A little of that general acquaintance with the springs and ordinary manner of men's action which passes under the name of a knowledge of human nature is all that the acutest and profoundest and shrewdest intellects have attained. It has always easily reached its limits, and in its attempts to forecast in detail the action of individuals has utterly failed. But here is a Lord of men's souls who is as deeply and perfectly familiar, at an instant, with the whole inner world and history of every person he meets as we are with the features of our

friends' faces. Nothing is hidden. You read his biographies. Constantly he moves about among his countrymen as one who does not need that any should testify of men. When the most complicated and obscure cases of moral disorder are brought to Him to be cured He makes no inquiries of the patient himself or of the bystanders: instantly He shows that He reads the malady in all its peculiar shades and workings, and administers to it precisely the healing influence it needs. So with the young man who fancied he had kept the commandments but lacked the self-sacrifice without which he could not really keep one of them; so with the Pharisees and rulers; so with Judas and Pilate; so with the faithless wife and the sinner whose sins every body else knew but every body else misjudged and aggravated. When He was before the woman at that well of Samaria He gave her, by a few penetrating words, the awful feeling that He knew all that ever she did. If He ever asked a question, it was evidently not for information, but only to fasten the attention and prepare the faith and tone the feeling of the subject of the miracle, or of the witnesses that stood by. And the result is just what we should expect. The faith has entered into the great body of Christians in all Christendom that Christ now knows them and reads them through and can save them. Even men who speculatively deny His divinity can not shake off the solemn and clinging sense of this Omniscience of the Saviour. Indeed how could He be a Saviour without knowing the real want and the real state of every personal heart He saves? How could He abide in any heart, an indwelling Lord, without beholding what is there? How could He be the Light of the world without its lying all open to His inspection? How could He judge men for their individual charac-

ters, as He declares He will, unless He comprehends every motive, and traces every line of secret and open error, and witnesses as in the light of day all the dark windings and delusions of desire and indulgence? No, my friends! There is no Christ for us save Him who has all knowledge, as He has all power, in Heaven and earth. And Omniscience is an attribute of God alone. We pray rightly in the Litany: "O God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." Let the arguments of controversy issue as they may, beyond and beneath all controversy, imbedded in the very secret framework and texture and historic truth of the Gospel, and living in the instincts of devout souls, rest these real proofs of the divinity of Christ. "Unto the angels God saith, He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire: but unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever."

II. From the Divine Searcher and Witness of Nathanael's spirit turn back to the man himself and the nature of that benediction which fell on him in the new title that Christ gave him.

He was not a faultless character; he was not even yet a member and a freeman in the Kingdom of Christ's redemption and the family of Christian love. He was an "Israelite" only; and he was "without guile," *i. e.*, without craft, self-conceit or insincerity,—genuine and lowly and teachable, having a soul open to receive spiritual light. "Guile" is the lie that the heart tells itself or others; it is the falsehood of feeling which more than all else clouds the religious perceptions and closes up the door of faith against the coming in of Christ. People often read that clause, "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," as if it were equivalent to a declaration of Nathanael's moral and spiritual perfection. It merely

pronounces him a Jew of ingenuous piety, so simple and true with himself and God that when the great Light in the Face and Cross of Christ should break upon him, it would find a ready and unobstructed entrance into the very seats and springs of his better life, moulding him into a Christian. Whatever that transaction was under the fig-tree it was neither the baptism of the Holy Ghost nor an admission into the covenant of the sacrifice. These were still to be.

What then does this blessing of singular beauty on Nathanael really import? It is a blessing on all genuine, unconscious goodness: the goodness that hides itself from men and becomes thereby only the more precious to God. Here is one of those new, original, gracious ideas, which the Gospel brings into the world, and spreads wherever it spreads its promises and helps for the common people. Not only is true Christian righteousness independent of station and publicity, but it is acceptable to God, and a sign of spiritual purity, in the degree that it avoids them and turns to God alone for its approver. Those are the great virtues which strike their roots first in retired places and become known abroad rather by accident than by express and intentional publication. They are the strong Christian men whose religion was known to Him whose eyes look through the thick coverts and into secret spots, before it was known to men. Attainments are of slow growth. It needs time to form habits, to outgrow ignorance and weakness, to conquer long-besetting sins. But sincerity in the religious life is indispensable at the very outset. There must be a willingness to believe; a spirit of faith; a seeking, with the docile desire to find. This was Nathanael's one promising, solid grace. Everything else pertaining to the completeness of Christian character could

be built upon it. Hence the encouragements the Gospel always holds out to genuine repentance, even when it is feeble, and to men of little faith provided it is faith of this unaffected quality. Anything else, Christ seems to say, rather than the sounding brass of heartless professions! The Pharisee and the hypocrite are the sinners that He never spares. All impulsive sins are venial; this settled, selfish, ostentatious unreality in piety alone is mortal and desperate. The piety He loves is that which lives and burns with steady heat, irrespective of all popular recognitions and rewards. It is content under the shade and covering of the fig-tree, hidden there as in the pavilion of the Almighty. It is satisfied with its own conscious communion with its Lord, in the closet, or that privacy in which men of much reserve or few acquaintanceships often walk even while they walk in public places. Its solitary hours are its best hours. It keeps straight on with the performance of every obscure and uncelebrated duty, conscientious and faithful in that which is least, not concerned about results or testimonials, but feeding on a hidden manna, secretly refreshed by promises and by festivals of Faith, waiting for its Lord to appear when He will. Hence it is, no doubt, that Christ deals so much in encouragements to those that are secretly faithful, and especially encouragements to prayer. He overlooks no real struggle and no earnest petition. How many timid and distrustful Christians there are that are distressed and saddened with a painful wonder whether any thing they have ever said or done has helped mankind or even been accepted of their Lord! Nathanael's blessing is for their comfort. "When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee."

It is, further, very impressively illustrated here how a modest and faithful performance of a lower kind of duty

prepares the way and tones up the spirit for the higher services and nobler privileges of more advanced stages of Christian progress. If the law of commandments is all you can yet take in, requiring obedience without much love, then be true to that. If prayer is a necessary religious exercise, rather than a chosen and delightful uprising of the soul as on wings to the air and light of Heaven, or if charity to the poor is exacted by the feeling "I ought" rather than prompted by the love of Christ constraining you to minister to His poor representatives, still keep on with the obedience. Nathanael was but an Israelite, and he clung to his fathers' God. "Before that Philip called thee," Christ says. Fidelity before Christ is fairly seen prepares for Him a prompt and glad reception when He is received. Humble duties lead on to high victories. The man that was true under the fig-tree has it said to him on the spot, "Hereafter ye shall see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

A child gave this admirable definition, in answer to the inquiry, "What is faith?" "Faith is doing as God tells you, and asking no questions." An illiterate man answered to the same inquiry, "Faith is just taking God at His word." These are the best because the most simple and practical descriptions of that inward and unspeakable power, the one needful thing of the Gospel, which sounds all the depths of mystery in the Bible and solves all the hard problems of Providence. Whether as respects the nature of God and His threefold Personality, or whether as respects the internal questionings that arise as to our own religious progress or worthiness or acceptance at last, here is the clue that leads out of all darkness into clear light. Christ our Lord sees and knows us altogether. Nothing then is too hard for us to do, and noth-

ing is too heavy to bear. He sees us not only to call our sins to judgment but to bestow His blessing on our least endeavors for His sake and our feeblest aspirations to attain to His likeness. The one rule for faith and the one safeguard for holiness of living is that our eyes should be looking unto and waiting on Him. For this is the great promise,—"Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

THE WAKING HEART.

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

"I SLEEP, but my heart waketh."—*Canticles* v. 2.

IT is sometimes seen that in the affectionate service of those dearest to us even the physical powers receive unwonted supplies of strength. Limited in themselves some gracious gift of God reinforces them, till they overpass their ordinary capacities of activity and endurance. So the hands of weak mothers become singularly strong for their children; the pious boy, in the Roman poem, bears the heavy frame of his father on his shoulders; Jonathan and his armor-bearer, climbing the rock, capture a whole terrified garrison of Philistines: the slave-woman, fleeing for freedom, seems to have as many arms as she has children, and a giant's grasp in each of them; in sick-rooms the burden of the invalid's weight feels light to the lifter that loves him; the whole quickened and inspired body recruits and hardens itself for wonderful exploits in the service of the heart. As this Song of Solomon expresses it, "Many waters can not quench love, neither can the floods drown it: love is better for strength than wine; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would be utterly contemned." We may take these only as illustrations from the plane of our natural experience to assist us in apprehending the deeper principle of the spiritual relation of the disciple to his Master.

"Whosoever loveth is born of God, and can not die." If he can not die, then all the bodily infirmities which threaten death, and seem to be leading us to it, like sleep, old age, disease, the sealing up of one sense after another, are only changes on the surface. There is an interior world, fair and fresh as ever. How often it is the prerogative of faith to turn bodily infirmities themselves into the occasions and ministers of a life that is richer, longer and happier,—a more living life! We pray for health; and we travel and spend and are sorely careful for it. But when we have seen how the spirit rose as the body sank, how sickness transfigured the soul first, and through that the countenance, how much holier the beauty of patience and trust is than any fleshly bloom or roundness—in a word how the heart waketh as the bodily forces sleep, we are obliged to question whether God's most privileged children are those that flourish in bodily prosperity. "He gave them their desire, but sent leanness into their souls." Thorns in the flesh, consumption, labors that return no fruit, unsatisfied aspirations, attempts ending in failure—it is through these that our spiritual nobility is bred; and here appears that victory of faith which overcometh the world. The outward man perishes, but the inward man is renewed day by day. As a creature of time and this world the disciple sleeps, but the heart, with Christ graciously formed within it, waketh.

This contrast, however, is only a part of our subject, which suggests a much wider range of thought. It virtually answers the practical and personal question, To what portion of our complicated constitution do Christ and His religion most directly appeal? If His religion is to possess and reign over us as a controlling power, what is it in us that we have especially to give

to Him, and whereabouts in us is His living truth to get its hold? If you take up the first two or three chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and notice what St. Paul says there about the Greeks, with their passion for intellectual celebrity, their ambition for a keen understanding, and their reluctance to believe any thing which could not explain and justify itself dialectically to the natural mind, so that in the sharp language of the Apostle the Greek wisdom had to become foolishness, and not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, could be called to lead the way into the Kingdom,—if you will read over all this, only substituting in each case for the word "Greeks," some modern name you will strike the particular religious malady of the day and get an inspired sermon on the conceit and irreverence which beget more than half our modern infidelity. As the case stands now,—and it stands so in more minds about us than confess it,—when Christ meets a man through any of His messengers and says to him, "Come to Me; believe on Me; live for Me; repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out; take up My cross and come after Me; look not back, but cling to Me, faithful unto death,"—what does the man probably say? He says, "My understanding is not satisfied about this or that point of theological doctrine,—about future punishment, or God's decrees, or miracles, or electing grace; make all that clear as mathematics or natural science to my mind and I will come;" or else he says, "I have understood that there are some perplexing matters of history, geology, chronology, in the Bible, and I am waiting to have all that cleared up." In one way or another the rational faculty stands conjuring up difficulties, and refusing to kneel down like a little child and pray. It will be more as-

tute, "independent," "original" to doubt, and more bold to tell the doubt. Sometimes the ministers have turned the people into this mischief unwittingly by preaching to them the mere anatomy of religion instead of a living and indwelling Christ and the duty of working daily righteousness in charity.

Holy Scripture speaks in common language and with what may be called an every-day treatment of truth, so as to bring it home to the conscience and interest of men, women, and children, just as they are living in human houses, shops, and streets. Accordingly it goes into no elaborate analysis or metaphysical classification of our interior powers; but by some quick, fiery stroke of the Spirit it lets us see just where the whole power of Christ in a man must be planted, and grow, and thrive, and triumph, and live, if it is to live at all,—viz., in his heart. It may be a simple statement,—"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." It may be only a tender invitation,—"My son, give Me thine heart." It may be a mystical prophecy, "Your heart shall live forever." It may be St. Paul's sublime praise of Christian charity in the thirteenth chapter to the Corinthians. It may be a solemn criterion of all conversation and behavior,—"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," or a yet more solemn judgment,—"This people draw nigh to Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." Or it may be some flash of light from the imagination of an inspired writer, "I sleep, but my heart waketh." The plain teaching is throughout the same. When Christ will come to govern and sanctify any character, it is the heart He chooses "for His cradle and His throne." The brain in the scales of the anatomist or the psychologist may weigh so many ounces, more or

less, or have such and such natural functions. If you are to be Christ's followers here and one of His saints by and by, you must choose Him, just as He first chose you, for love's sake, and open wide to Him your heart. He comes. His Advent is nigh at hand. In a sense far finer than your poor cavilling criticism comprehends, "His heart is filled with the dew, and His locks with the drops of the night," because you give Him no place where to lay His head, and you make Him dwell in the clefts of the rock, and you do practically say, with the cruelty of His crucifiers, "As for this Man, we know not whence He is. We will not have Him to reign over us." If you are found without Him, at last, and call upon those rocks to cover you, because there is such a thing as a wrath even of the Lamb,—it will be not because your mind was too strong, but because your heart was too hard.

It can not be objected to this truth that it sets up one capacity of our nature above another, as if it were jealous of that other. Christianity disparages no original or legitimate faculty in man, from the least to the greatest. It means to develop them all, and harmonize them all. It wants a complete unfolding of every faculty,—will, conscience, intellect, feeling, and even the outer man of the body, all adjusted and reconciled, each vigorous and healthful in its place, and all serving together in the common work of every honest calling, everywhere, every day. Yet none the less true is it that the *peculiar* organ and seat of power for our religion is the heart. We know it, because when Christ Himself did actually address and convert men and join them to His Fellowship, He spoke by all His persuasions to their hearts. We know it because they, on their part, when they cast away their nets and tax-tables to come after

Him did not stay for processes of reasoning but yielded with sympathetic and trusting hearts. We know it because afterwards, as their epistles and preaching show, from Pentecost to the death of St. John, as they went from country to country, the light they carried was not in syllogisms, or cabinets, or libraries, but in the Heart and the Cross of the Redeemer. We know it because to this day so many men of the stoutest understandings and the largest intellects, unconsecrated, never confess the supreme glory of Heaven and earth in the face of Jesus Christ, but are restless all their lives and die as the fool dieth. We know it because so many men of the ripest spiritual character, walking most purely and humbly with God, ministering and not ministered unto, have yet been illiterate persons, deep-sighted yet not drilled in any school but sorrow, found in slaves' cabins and in the company of Lazarus. We know it because if we know any thing of the experience of sanctification whatever, we know that from the earliest dawn of faith, from the first stirrings of holy purpose, and at every following step in the path from first to last, it is pre-eminently the heart's work. We know it, because though the will be weak, the memory uncertain, the reason slow, yet over all these disadvantages the heart of a hearty believer triumphs. We know it because though all else, in the comparison, is asleep, the Christian heart waketh.

Nor will any conceit of unbelief be allowed to fancy it finds, in this account of the matter, any occasion of disesteem for piety as having its spring among emotions rather than principles. We live in a world of realities where emotions are often the mightiest reasons. They are crude thinkers who imagine they must dispose of their sensibilities before they can begin to be men, afraid

to trust themselves to a faith of charities and graces. They forget that there never yet was a genuine hero or reformer in the world, however rough his girdle or wild his meat, who had not a great and loving heart in him. In fact, men never are heroes at all except with their hearts. Courage is heart-age, heart-action. Self-sacrifice, loyalty, magnanimity, compassion, fidelity,—all that is grandest in history, all that is most moving in tragedy, all the most splendid creations of the beautiful arts,—think them over,—they have their origin and subjects in the power and passion and immortality of the human heart. The heart fights the battles of freedom before the head writes their story and celebrates them. "Man is more than constitutions." Policies, philosophies, sciences,—all have a greatness of their own, but as it always has been from the beginning, so it always will be to the end: men will turn away from them to the higher and more commanding interests of their affections. Did not our Almighty Lord set a little child in the midst of the wise and strong to teach them? God Himself is love: "Whoso loveth is born of God, and dwelleth in God, and God in him." Heartiness is sincerity, and that, everywhere, is life and power. It is precisely the *heartless* character, you know, that is least manly, least strong. Prayers that are of the heart, faith that is of the heart, zeal that is of the heart,—these no self-respecting man can scorn, for they are the greatness of the world as they are the glory of the Church and the honor of her Head.

We come, in this way, to realize what is most specially wanted to set open the currents of a new religious life and to begin a grander activity in every department of Christian power. It is not more speculation, or more ingenuity, or more machinery, or more pomp. It is

this waking of the heart, a resolute, reverential, inward waking, the only true awakening that has ever really revived God's work. The churches are thirsting for some unknown visitation; they languish as if in a valley of Baca waiting for impossible prophets to come and make it a well or turn it into a garden of spices. But the Saviour is still saying, as when He sat in the summer midday by the old well of Jacob whose waters had been springing up two thousand years,—"Whosoever drinketh of this water," or any water that human labor or merit may dig for, "shall thirst again. But the water that I shall give him shall be in him"—in his heart—"a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This was what made the apostolic age of the Church its missionary age. Christ Himself, when He wanted apostles, did not wait to satisfy an inquisitive understanding or a heartless curiosity. Knowing that the understanding would assent to His teachings when it should have time, He knew also that love is a surer and swifter interpreter, and so He laid hold on the affections. Postponing the untimely questionings of Sadducees and Pharisees He simply healed the sick, forgave the penitent, raised the dead, so bringing the heart right and leaving the persuaded mind to follow. If we tarried for every skeptical phantom of the brain, how often the angel of opportunity would fly by, and harvests of good perish at our feet!

When we talk of the dangers or mistakes that attend a quickening of Christian hearts, shall we forget that there is no danger so dreadful as that our hearts should not engage themselves in Christ's living work at all? The fanaticism you have to fear is the fanaticism of mammon and its comforts. St. Paul has depicted a possible debasement—where men are *past*

feeling,—given over to work all uncleanness with greediness. Remember, he says, that the blindness which hath so darkened them is the blindness in their hearts.

Remember also that before any one of your hearts can be awake in the life everlasting it must wake consciously and directly to the love of its Divine Friend. Common kindness, amiability, good fellowship, are something: but a happy temperament is not faith, nor do natural attachments unsanctified by faith carry with them any assurance of salvation. Not till you rest your love on the Infinite Heart can you inherit the promises of God. If Christendom is broken miserably into sects, with sectarian rancor and animosity ever making the breach wider, it is the waking of a stronger and deeper love of the one Lord alone that can unite us in one Body, with one Baptism. If local alienations hinder the cause and keep good men apart, it only needs that they should love their Saviour more than they suspect or hate or envy one another. If there is much captious criticism of the pulpit, men will cease fault-finding at the preacher when they are satisfied to find Christ crucified is preached, however plain or familiar the message. If the preaching, after all, is too dull, be sure it is not more secular culture or more eloquence but the richer heart of love and faith that will make it the bread of life to human souls. And if the messengers are too few, as God knows they are, what is so likely to bring and multiply them as a heartier earnestness of prayer and holy life in the people and in the priests already at the altars?

What remains for us, then, personally, to do? You say you can not compel your affections to move. But you can so present to them their Perfect Object, the Son of Man in His infinite goodness—that they may be

changed into the same image, laying hold on Him with a love stronger than life or death.

For the rest, the Holy Spirit, breathing upon us, will waken and sanctify us. "Awake, then, O north wind, and come, thou south wind," blow upon "the wilderness" of our unfruitful lives and make it a "Garden of the Lord."

HELPLESSNESS AND ITS MASTER.

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

"And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine own house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God."—*St. Matt.* ix. 2–8.

The subject of the narrative found in to-day's Epistle is the healing of disease. The sublime mystery it touches and opens is the relation of bodily to inward disorder, and our Lord's divine mastery over both.

There are three views of the object of our Lord's outward miracles. One regards them as simply so many marvels of power, signs of supernatural authority, arbitrarily selected and put forth as proofs of the performer's divinity. Other kinds of mastery might have been taken as well; only these were chosen.

A second view regards them as demonstrations not only of Christ's authority but of His benevolence. Power and mercy are blended in them. Some relief to suffering, comfort to sorrow, ministration to want, is joined with the evidence of a superhuman will. The miracle

shows God to be present not only as King over nature, bending its forces and controlling its methods, but present in the tenderness of love, to lighten human pain.

Both these views represent truths. But neither one nor both together will be found to fill the truth out. As to the first, though it was a primary purpose of these wonders to create faith in Christ, yet it must be a faith made up of trust in His infinite goodness, as well as admiration or awe at His infinite strength. As to the second, there are some few instances of Christ's exercise of command over nature where we can not trace any *immediate* purpose of mercy, like the cursing of the barren fig-tree, the destruction of the swine, and the providing of the piece of money for tribute. Besides, when we compare the limited number of sufferers that the Saviour succored by miracle with the vast miseries of mankind at large, it can not be for a moment supposed that comfort was the final cause of such interposition.

We need, therefore, to bring in the third explanation, which sees in these marvels signs of a divine correspondence between the things of nature and the things of the spirit: between facts of the outer world and facts of the inner world, making the laws and the forms of matter symbols and shadows of what is going on in the soul and in Christ's kingdom of souls. So the multiplied bread becomes before Christ a visible image of the nourishment He brings down from Heaven for true believers in His Church. The hunger He feeds points us to the famishing of prodigal hearts, empty amidst the surfeits of the senses. Lifeless bodies stirring and reviving at His touch signify,—and with what intense meaning!—the dead in trespasses and sins. A stormy sea put to rest images the tranquillizing of a soul tossed between conscience and passion, or darkened over with doubts.

The Mediator who heals physical maladies is felt to be the Restorer of disordered minds. Furthermore the special kinds of disease brought to be cured bear obvious analogies to different plagues in our hearts: fever to impetuous desire; leprosy to uncleanness; lameness to an impotent will; a withered hand to spiritual shrinkage by avarice and pride; waste of blood to waste of life; evil possession to the assaults of Satan on virtue.

I. So in the text palsy stands for spiritual prostration and indifference. In that form of bodily disease the muscular system which gives motion and the sensibility which receives impressions fail together. Action and feeling are smitten and chilled at once. Still, all is not gone. The numbness has not struck to the seats and centre of life. Palsy is not death. The blood still courses through its channels. The Great Physician has passed over from the other country and is nigh at hand. Who can tell but this palsy-smitten soul, in whichever one of us, imbecile and slowly perishing, may hear and spring up and live?

II. Follow up this correspondence to notice the condition of the cure. It appears that this poor patient does hear, does believe, and is ready to obey. Our case is never desperate till we despair of ourselves. A consciousness of infirmity and helplessness there may be; painful, bitter, wretched; all the agony of remorse; all the sickness of failure; and yet it may come far short of despair. The first is meant to send us to the Saviour: the other hinders us from coming and fixes our feet where we are. Let one never despair of another. The outward aspect may be very disheartening. The man was "lying on a bed." Yet "they brought him" to Jesus.

"They brought him." Notice the instruction of this neighborly and vicarious kindness. There are instances

where the sick man alone lacks force to arise. Disease has struck too far in. Even if there is resolution enough to start, the feeble frame sinks back. Unless Priest or Levite or Samaritan will come, the half-dead by the wayside will die. So wonderfully is our social nature wrought together that one of the indispensable and regular necessities of Christ's Church, for the cure of souls, is the sympathy of intercession. All that carries many of us over from being "almost" to being "altogether" persuaded is some hand of help reached out, some tender tone or encouraging word uttered, some prayer lifted from a heart beside our own. Were all our personal histories laid open, how often would it appear that our temporary or our fatal failure has been between resolving and doing; between the saying, "I go, sir," and the going;—and has been *there*, only because some Christian brother's kindness was wanting. Uncover all the secret connections of any public crime, or any ruined character, and there would be startling revelations of things left undone and things done by unsuspected persons, parties to that perdition. Not only must friends bring friends to Christ, not only must parents bring children, and sisters their brothers, and worshippers their fellow-worshippers; but, as we can never know how many close by us are faltering on the edge of peril, or hesitating at the gates of life, it becomes us to be unstinted and unwearying in our supplications, bringing to the Healer them that will not bring themselves. The nerveless, the purposeless, enfeebled wills, palsied energies, are lying all around us: and we ought to fill the air about them with our pleadings till it becomes a climate of sanctification.

Observe also, that in the fulfilment of the necessary condition, faith and action are joined, and the action ex-

presses the faith. These persons not only believed abstractly in Christ's power; they *brought* their sick neighbor where He was. Nor, on the other hand, did they bring him as an experiment, or conjecture, to see what might come of it; they brought him *to be cured.* It was the faith of confident expectation. Is there not often a lurking skepticism in our devotions and in our work, as if we were rather making a venture, with our petitions or our efforts, than relying implicitly on a blessing under the covenants of promise? On our way to the cure of our spiritual disorders there is no time for speculation, or curiosity, or the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life: only to draw near with faith, bearing our burden, and one another's burdens, to our Lord. Jesus "saw their faith."

III. And seeing it, He said unto the sick of the palsy, —what is it that He said? First He said, "Son, be of good cheer!" A title of endearment and an assurance of hope. We mark here the exact adaptation of Christ's treatment to the spiritual states before Him. He never administers stimulus to self-confidence, or rebuke to self-abasement. Warnings are for the proud and the gay: condemnation is for the self-righteous: reproof for the ambition of the officious brothers: a sharp and searching test for the young man that thought himself better than he was: woes for the Pharisees that thought themselves better than any body; a stinging epithet, "Go and tell that fox,"—for crafty Herod: but for the sincere only compassion; for the perplexed only a clear direction; for the penitent "Go in peace"; for a despondent victim of palsy,—"Son, be of good cheer." The Christian life must begin in its strength just at the point where nature is most infirm. And what does the Lord say afterward? Not certainly what the attendants or what the

sick man expected: nothing of the palsy, nothing of restoration to bodily vigor; but something quite different: "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

The difference however is more in appearance than in reality. His words rather reveal a deep insight into the relations of physical and moral evil. Our outward calamities, however important the part they bear in our moral discipline, are not the principal ailment we have to bring to our Master. Sufferings of body and estate, if not the direct consequence, are at least the monitory memorials and the distant fruit of pestilence and palsy spreading through the corrupted heart of humanity. As the sting of death is sin, so the bitterness of pain is sin. Take in the breadth of the world and the long lines of historical causation, and we shall find sorrow is in the world because sin is here. And hence, our Redeemer's first care is to remove not discomfort but disobedience. Once rid of our wickedness all our sicknesses will be endurable; and so the saints have ever found them. The moment we begin to think more anxiously of release from the aching and burning flesh or from anxieties about these things in our families than of the dearth of holiness and the deadness of ingratitude; then, as we approach our Deliverer He will speak to us here not of our pains but of our trespasses. All real trouble centres there. Redemption includes at last, indeed, blessing and regeneration for our whole condition: but it was for our transgressions that the Author of it was smitten: it was to bear away our iniquities that He took our sicknesses: and we may be sure some more alarming disease than any that kills the body is on us if we are dissatisfied when He substitutes absolution for long life, and only says to us, "Thy sins be forgiven thee!"

IV. Nevertheless, the low instincts and preferences of

the natural man chafe at this Divine Friendliness. Behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, "This man blasphemeth." These scribes represent jealous and selfish human nature. This friendliness is too wise, too deep, too holy, for their lower desires. So we go on praying God to grant us expensive comforts which may betray us, and to spare us wholesome correction which might be everlasting salvation to us. When we are looking for riches, promotion, a prosperous settlement, health,—we grow impatient of Providence. Even the gracious voice which offers the remission of our sins sounds like an impertinent interruption. An endless life with God is postponed for the petty plans of a day. The sick man and his friends are dumb with disappointment. The scribes, watchful for the chance of a hostile criticism, are bolder and say within themselves, "Blasphemy." Earthly minds can not see behind outward effects. Scribes halt in the letter. How often, when we seem to be praying "Thy will be done," we are really only trying to persuade our Maker that our own will should be done! This is not prayer. It is either argument or dictation. Even in the great concerns of salvation, self-will, seeming to be pious, still demands to be saved after its own manner. It will bring its infirmities to Jesus if He will only treat them as it likes. It will consent to be saved if pride can have the satisfaction of feeling that its own works have earned salvation. It scorns the humiliation of taking it by faith from the Crucified. It will submit to God if it can choose its own path, its own residence, its own vocation, its own companions. But is this taking up Christ's cross? Is this to ask, "Thy will *not mine* be done"? It is not till we are awakened to see what sin really is, to feel its burden, to taste its bitterness, to smart under its sting, that we

are ready to cry, "Lord, do with me as Thou wilt; give what Thou wilt; deny what Thou wilt,—health or prosperity, or honor, or power, only withhold not from me the pardon of my deep impurity; cleanse me from secret faults; wash me till my soul is white; form Thine image in my broken and contrite heart, and let not iniquity have dominion over me."

V. Here, then, in the cavils of these spectators, the Divine Physician finds a new disorder more deep-struck than the other. Behold how His compassion comes to meet it; with what divine patience He changes the manner of His mercy and is willing by any means to convince the people that He is their Lord: "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" I might easily have said, "Arise and walk;" I have been ready to confer an infinitely greater blessing; you hesitate to receive it, and question My divine authority. Lo! you are not left in your unbelief and sin. The love wherewith I love men wants to cure both your diseases together, and the world shall be without excuse in rejecting Me. "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."

All miracle is one; the cure of sick bodies, the forgiveness of sick hearts. Let us not deceive ourselves with what we may call, in the mere pompousness of our ignorance, "laws of nature." Nature has no law apart from the holy, merciful, orderly will of its Creator. Nature itself is the scene He has formed for the spiritual and immortal training of His children. If life and health will do this best for an individual, life and health God will ordain. If pain or bereavement is needful, the Hand of His love will take the sharp instrument up. He is looking into all houses and into every soul to see which discipline He shall use. And whether we come to Him in the free choice of our strength, or are "brought" to

Him "lying on a bed," He will have but one plan for us, —that we so repent and believe that our sins may be blotted out, and that we walk after His commandment, in newness of life.

VI. Finally "the multitude glorified God." The intended result was reached. The Lord's method is always the sure one. Sometimes by taking up and using the griefs and the weaknesses of our outward condition, sometimes by the direct operation of His Spirit on the stains of the soul, His healing work proceeds. All that will *come* by faith, all that will *be brought* by faithful intercession, He will welcome and heal. They shall arise and go to their house,—which is their Father's house of many mansions. The multitude shall see it; they shall "marvel"; for wonder and reverence ever mingle with true praise;—and so they shall glorify God.

I said the power of all miracle, in nature and grace, for body and for soul, is one. There is one Lord. More than this, we have all been palsy-struck. There is one deep, inborn disease,—the insensibility of a self-seeking, earth-bound nature. Many as the individual forms of our offending are there are not many medicines, nor many physicians. One only can heal. The physician for the body is never so genuine and so strong in his high calling as when, adding consecration to learning, and faith to skill, he stands before his patient a believing witness to *that One*; as when he enters every room of sickness in the Church's Spirit and in her name; when his coming is a presence of peace to that house, and to all that dwell in it, bringing "comfort and sure confidence," handling mortal maladies with the holy hands of one who knows the "Almighty God is the Lord of life and death and of all things to them per-

taining," till Science herself becomes as it were a priest in his person, and the physician an evangelist.

What then, living or dying, should our prayer be but that of the holy Eligius who walked with God by this same truth in the dark times of twelve centuries ago and was now on the borders of the world of light and ready to be offered?

"Remember me, Thou who only art without sin, Saviour of the world! Take me out of the body of this death and save me in Thy Heavenly Kingdom! Thou hast ever been my guardian; into Thy hands I commend my Spirit. I know that I deserve not to see Thy face. Receive me, then, according to Thy great mercy, and let me not be ashamed of my expectation. Let Thy gracious hand protect me, and lead me into Thy place of refreshment, be it but the meanest dwelling which Thou hast prepared for them that fear Thee!"

And whilst so praying he departed.

THE PATIENCE OF GOD.

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

"THE long-suffering of God waited."—*I Peter* iii. 20.

THE particular term that is applied here to the Almighty represents Him as we are not very apt to think of Him,—*i. e.*, as having before Him all the evil, of every kind, in His children, and bearing it; our ingratitude, our disobedience, our folly, our fickleness, our obstinacy, our selfishness, our wilfulness, our sensuality, our irreverence, our vanity;—the whole dark and diversified mass of our sin. The catalogue of its shapes and degrees is well-nigh inexhaustible, yet it does not exhaust His patience. In breadth and depth the guilt, even to our mortal eyes, seems insufferable, yet His long-suffering suffers it. He beholds and yet He tolerates it all. The more closely we fix attention on this single character of God,—His patience,—the more wonderfully it will open before us the truth that He alone is worthy to be worshipped. And if it does not make us more ashamed of these iniquities,—if it does not stir us up to try harder than ever to renounce and abandon them, it will be only because the depravity has struck its roots so deep that the most tender and beautiful and grand of all His attributes, His patience, fails to move us.

We have, it is true, as men and women, our disapprobations and even our little indignations at wrong-doing.

But what marks a special contrast between them and the Divine displeasure is this, that as they gain in strength our human antipathies toward transgression are apt to grow hot and hasty. We want to see judgment against evil works executed speedily, forgetting that it was only just now that we began to see them to be evil works. Our brother trespasses against us and, not considering that he is our brother, moulded of just such clay and subject to just such infirmities as ourselves, we cry out for the magistrate and the prison, if not the lash; and sometimes because there is no lash in the jailer's hand, we take one up with our tongue. Perhaps some personal pique or revenge or other selfish passion shoots its venom into our reproaches. Perhaps the pride of opinion or the pride of party, under the guise of righteous scruples, is for stoning the offender or banishing the penitent from Simon's exemplary house. Like the Pharisees about the man born blind, it mingles piety and hatred together,—"Give God the praise, we know that this Man is a sinner," and says angrily to the officers, "Why have ye not brought Him? This people that knoweth not the law are cursed." It matters nothing that the great Lord, in His long-suffering, has forgiven the debt of ten thousand talents: it takes the fellow-servant by the throat for a hundred pence. This is the impatient spirit that vitiates so many of our remonstrances against our neighbors' crimes, and that alienates so many popular efforts at social reform from the large and effectual charity of the Gospel of Christ.

Let us give a little wider reach to the treatment of the subject by contemplating the patience of God in its sublime delay, its slowness as men count slowness, in bringing about the most beneficent ends.

He shows us this patience first as the Maker of things.

You find it in the unhurried order of the natural creation; the slow building and furnishing of the outer worlds; the slow succession of geologic ages; the slow procession in ascending ranks, one only so little above another, of the races of plants and animals, affording an epoch for a reptile or a fern; the slow preparation of the planet for its final purpose in the rearing of an immortal family, the revelation of the spiritual glory of the Divine Man in the flesh, and the manifestation, by that incarnation, of a new earth with the sons of God for its kings and priests. When He would lay beds of solid rock as the pillars of a continent, making a thousand years as one day, He deposits them of the small sand, grain by grain. When He would fix the beams of His chambers in the waters, He chooses very rarely for mechanics the gigantic forces of earthquake or deluge, but He piles together countless legions of small skeletons till the coral masonry makes at last the mightiest architecture. When He would burnish and adorn some cavern with the splendor of crystals that outshine all the pictures of art and man's device He drips into the dark gallery, drop by drop, for centuries, the waters that He holds in the hollow of His hand. He does not warm the air and earth at once by firebolts but by silent sunbeams. He does not moisten the land by waterspouts and cataracts, but by beads of dew, night after night, making small the drops of rain, and sprinkling them upon the pastures and the wilderness patiently, from the Psalmist's day to ours. So in bringing each single specimen of a human creature to its maturity, notice how He refuses to exert His power in hastening the process. He sets the faculties, the hands, the time of at least one adult person to watch and nurse and wait upon a helpless child for years. All the resources of omnipotence being forever at His command, He moves forward

the prosecution of His plan at an almost imperceptible rate of advancement. For *there is* a plan. It will not answer to suppose that the delay is owing to any indifference, or any uncertainty about the result. On all these vast periods are stamped plain signs of what He means to do at last. Traces of fore-ordained organs and uses are everywhere. Masters of science say they can find in the lowest and rudest forms of organized and living matter down by that coral reef a type and prophecy of more to come, just as we see the full dispensation of the Second Adam foreshadowed in Genesis, and the Church of Christ prefigured in the tabernacle and worshippers of the wilderness. The slowness is not because there is no definite end to be worked out, but only because it is God, the patient God, the God who seeth that end from the distant beginning, the God who waiteth, that is working it.

We rise from the physical to the moral world. Take the broadest divisions of the human family,—races and nations. From their beginnings in the East, as an eastern shepherd leads out his flocks the Everlasting Father has brought His tribes out of their native sheepcotes and stationed them here and there over the globe. Slowly they crept westward, in their pastoral or commercial or military migrations, from one line of valleys to another, along the rivers, around the shores of the Mediterranean, across southern deserts, up among the northern forests, through the gaps of mountains, sailing for islands, navigating oceans, colonizing and populating both the hemispheres. Sometimes the advancing wave was checked and thrown back a thousand years. Sometimes the pioneers halted in their march, and stood still for generations. Vast territories with fertile soils and blooming vegetation, with the wealth of navies and harvests in

their bosom, were waiting to receive them: and some are waiting still. God waited His own good time for occupying them with human industry. Nor is this the chief exercise of His patience. One after another these nations have broken away from their Creator's commandment. For each one of them He kindled the light of conscience or of revelation, to show them the way, and they shut their eyes upon it. Every national life has grown corrupt. No sooner have they come to prosperity than they have come to luxury, idleness, and the beginnings of decay. They have tempted and betrayed each other; cheated, fought, enslaved, murdered each other. The strong have oppressed the weak, the cunning over-reached the simple, the rich despised the poor, the poor hated and envied the rich. None of them have been permanently pure, just and good,—no, not one. Not one country but has been soaked with human blood; not one government but has had its convulsions and insurrections. And on all this long and horrible train of public sins and shames God has been looking down: Himself holy, just and good, Himself the "Author of peace and lover of concord," Himself hating iniquity and delighting in mercy, in equity, in chastity, in truth and good-will. Very seldom has He come to them with sudden judgments or wide-spread desolations. He has waited till they would destroy themselves. He has tried them again and again. When one has gone down He has set up another, and waited patiently for that. Even the one people that He chose out of all the rest for His own, folding and guarding them, ransoming and saving them, bearing them as on an eagle's wings through the wilderness, only trying and proving them with gentle judgments to see what was in their hearts, even this darling Israel turned itself into the bitterest of-

fence against Him. But His long-suffering waited, and waited not only in the days of Noah, as the text says, but waited through the age of the patriarchs, waited through the age of Moses, and of the judges, and of the kings, waited till the captivity, waited and brought them back after it, waited till the fullness of time, waited till the voice of earlier and later prophets had died away, crying, "All the day long have I stretched out My hands, unto a disobedient and gainsaying people," till one of the last of them had to confess, "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws which He set before us." You know it is not so with us. As soon as we become really awake to any great social wrong we are for having the wrong-doer visited with sharp and immediate retribution. God is always awake to every wrong, not only to those that we see, but to thousands that we never see. His Holy Spirit is much more seeing and searching than we are. We exclaim in our anger, "Smite them; sink them; burn them. Make speed!" But lo! He does not make speed. He lengthens out their evil day. He gives them space for repentance. He waits for them. He giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. And herein is the patience of God.

But we can bring the doctrine home much closer to our personal feeling than this. We all know well enough what those things are that try and irritate *us*, in the common intercourse of life, and where our patience gives way. We know what the provocation is, when our motives are misjudged, or our self-respect is insulted; when mean calculations take advantage of our friendship; when our children are forgetful or wilful, our pupils dull, our servants careless, our neighbors arrogant,

our beneficiaries unthankful or impertinent. We all know the sting that hurts us in contempt, in estrangement, in forgetfulness. To be crowded upon by intrusion, or curiosity, or conceit; to be patronized; to be contradicted;—these are some of the tests of our patience. Now, all these hateful things, in every instance, are known to God. They are full in His sight. Just so far as they are real offences at all, they are offences against Him before they are to us. He does not overlook them, but looks directly at them all. There is no haughty indifference with God to little faults, or little vexations. The smallest sin is magnified to Him ten thousand fold. By as much as His Spirit is holier, intenser, perfect altogether in its sensitive and glorious purity, by just so much these little wrongs and transgressions hurt Him more keenly, and are aggravated in His sight. His sympathies, His abhorrence, His indignation, are infinite; but so is His long-suffering. These particular annoyances and stupidities, these cruelties and negligences, these breaches of charity and decency, these meannesses, lusts, debaucheries, vanities,—do you suppose that they are less really abominable to God than to you—the best of you? He looks on and sees the weak injured, the innocent oppressed, a proud master abusing a feeble victim. Why does He not strike down the insolent libertine, and break to pieces the wicked system, and disperse to the four winds the banded sects of error and unbelief? He knows why—He waits. Never imagine one sin escapes Him. The cries of those which have reaped, while the pleasure-seekers have been wanton, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. He sees the tyrants, the traitors, the hardened profligates, living out their many days, and some of them dying natural deaths in their beds, the Alvas and Torquemadas, small

and great, of every age,—His judgment-seat not moved forward one hair's breadth to meet them this side the grave. Some one says, God is patient because He is eternal: and so we make excuses for our *im*patience. God is patient because He is good, as well as because He is strong and wise. He waits for men that they may return to Him. He spares them that they may spare each other. He forgives us for Christ's sake, that we may forgive one another, every one his brother's trespasses.

And then, if we could look far into the heart of God, might it not appear that He has—considering their light, their calling, their privileges and promises—quite as much occasion to let His patience have her perfect work in the inconstancies of Christians as in the crimes of unbelievers?—the cold affections, lifeless prayers, halting steps, the staying back from the heights of grand attainment on the part of those who have taken the vows and engagements of the Church, as well as the reckless wickedness of those who have refused them? He has to wait even for His own people that He has redeemed,—the Bride that He has loved,—the Church that He has purchased with His blood,—in her backward and worldly living.

Take the dealing of God with one of His unfaithful children: it may be some one that you know: it may be yourself. He gave you first life. He gave you every thing that makes life worth having or keeping. He wants you to be faithful that you may live a blessed life forever. You break away into transgression, into prodigality, into unbelief, into chosen sin. See now His waiting goodness. Think what the swiftness and awfulness of His judgment might be. He waits, if possibly you may come to yourself, your better self, and turn.

He waits for innumerable ministries of good to do their awakening or healing work. He waits for time, for reason, for conscience, for shame, for natural gratitude, for prophets within and prophets without, for change of scene and place, for remonstrances and pleadings of affection, for the laws of health and sickness in the body to execute their retributions, for old friendships and voices out of the past, for memory and fear, for solitude and company, for sermons and Sundays, for the sight of dead faces and for tolling bells, for the miserable endings of other men's iniquities, for remembered sentences of Scripture, for encouragements and hopes, for the inward transformations of His Spirit. So the Heavenly Husbandman waiteth for His Heavenly fruit, and hath long patience for it. Is there no saving power for you in that patience?

It is quite noticeable that one of the Apostles of our Lord dwells on this grace of patience with peculiar earnestness, returning to it as if it had a special power to his conscience and a special sacredness to his heart; and this is St. Peter, from whom my text is taken. Have we not a reason for this, and at the same time a deeper look into his warm heart, when we turn to his personal character and history? His was just one of those impressible, impetuous temperaments—with great faults and great virtues, which lay a heavy tax upon the patience of friends, and yet inspire, beneath all that, a lively interest. So he must have felt how repeatedly and bitterly he had tried that one Divine Friend who had called him to be a disciple and forgiven him again and again. Ardent, rash, vacillating,—starting in faith to walk on the waters, yet suddenly afraid and beginning to sink,—ready to break His Master's law of love by smiting with the sword,—interrupting with

his refusal the calm and holy action when the Lord washed His followers' feet, denying thrice the Saviour that he loved after all and was afterwards ready to die for,—it is not strange, that, as he looked back on his blotted record when he was growing old, and wrote his epistles, he should enlarge with tender and grateful unction on this heavenly patience. No wonder he testified that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation, and rejoiced that with Him a thousand years are as one day, and unfolded that lofty ideal of Christian long-suffering where not only he that is buffeted for his faults but he that suffers for doing well takes it patiently,—and strengthens his brethren with the promise that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Nor is the whole Scripture less clear and strong as to the practical value of this virtue in the Christian standard of character. Thus it shows us the kneeling suppliant at his lord's feet crying, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." It pronounces its blessing on those that bring forth fruit with patience. It casts in a beam of light on the dark mystery of our sufferings by telling us that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, bidding us rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. It exhorts Christians to be patient toward all men while it directs them into the patient waiting for Christ, even as the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, though He seems to delay His coming. Seven times it puts long-suffering among the direct signs of the new and spiritual mind. The ministers of God are proved in their office by their "much patience." St. Paul prizes that mark of faith and inward victory so highly that he glories in the Thessalonian believers for their patience

of hope: and he evidently means a patience which works out its beautiful triumph in the common vexations of the Christian's every-day life. An Evangelist grandly figures the posture of all vigilant and faithful souls as that of servants who wait, in patient readiness, for the coming of their Lord. In the Epistle to the Romans stands that magnificent image of a whole redeemed creation waiting for the final august manifestation of the sons of God, patient amidst its groanings and travailings in pain. When the veil is lifted before the glories of the future, the third angel is heard saying, "Here is the patience of the saints. Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Then speaks the voice from Heaven, "Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: Even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors."

Nay, further yet: by one true and deep interpretation of it the Cross of our Saviour is but the symbol of this doctrine. Patience and Passion are but varied forms of one word: the sacrifice of long-suffering. In the Son of Mary the patience of God comes down among men, and we behold His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, in the face of Jesus Christ giving His life for the world, and waiting for its faith.

The Patience of God! To some of you, fellow-worshippers, every added week of life must make more impressive and pre-eminent this wonderful long-suffering. Such lines of thought as these are only fragmentary glimpses. But they raise us, it seems to me, to a more reverential and more adoring worship of His Name. How can we possibly go back from them to live our low and worldly lives again, ungrateful for this forbearance, unbelieving toward this Father? Conscience takes up the

Apostle's question: "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" They confirm our faith in that final and sure Judgment, which is only the more sure because it is so slow, where the least and most secret sin shall be brought to light, and where perfect justice and perfect mercy shall meet together. They must quicken and enlarge our charity. For God's patience is one of His imitable attributes. "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as he had pity on thee?"

Now the God of patience grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus, unto whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all praise and honor, world without end!

HOW GOD IS KNOWN.

Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity.

"WHERE is thy God?"—*Ps.* xlii. 10.

DURING the prevalence of the disease known as the "Black Death," in the fourteenth century, the people in some of the European cities attributing the disorder to a poison secretly disseminated by Jews furiously murdered these Israelites, it is said, by thousands, and then built Christian churches and church belfries out of the houses and estates of the slaughtered victims. The Inquisition tormented mankind in the name of God, interspersing services of worship among its atrocities. The savages of New Zealand devote their enemies to destruction in prayers at the beginning of their wars, and it is a common threat with their priests that they will "pray their enemies to death." In Judea a council of Pharisees, catechizing a poor man whom Christ had cured of a life-long malady, said, "*Give God the praise*, we know that this Man (Jesus) is a sinner," trying to wring out of the mouth of an unwilling witness a condemnation of the most just and merciful Person they or their prophets had ever seen,—with an adjuration to Jehovah. These and other such facts move two questions:

1. What is our knowledge of God? Is the germ of it born with us to be developed, or revealed to us to be accepted? 2. And what has this knowledge of God to

do with personal character? Such questions as these plainly lie at the foundations of religious doctrine and near the fountains of religious life.

We speak to one another of our Creator as if there were a common understanding about Him. We use His name, as if that name would carry the same impression to every mind. We call upon each other to love God more, as if the word "God" meant the same thing to every heart.

Strictly this can not be. There are as many impressions of God as there are persons. When His great name is spoken here, if each person who hears it pauses and asks himself what God is, however much the several answers may have in common, each is distinct and individual. They all only make approaches to an unspeakable and unfathomable truth.

Nor will uniformity be secured by any attempt at definitions. Whatever explanations we undertake, the modifying effects of our individuality will pursue us everywhere. Does it follow, then, that in all this diversity a knowledge of God is to be set down as a thing of hopeless uncertainty,—a mere human circumstance dependent on moods, or culture, or constitution? We are told in Scripture that we ought to know God, and that the people that know Him shall be strong. Our apprehension of God's character depends, and was meant to depend, very largely on conditions for which we are ourselves responsible. The text implies this.

The mere *idea* of God as a Being may be said to be natural. Men have various modes of trying to demonstrate the fact that there is such a Being; some make it an intuition of the soul; others infer it from general belief; others from marks of design in creation; others from the necessary relations of ideas, or things. But

that a God exists may be taken as a primary idea in the human mind.

The conception of the Divine *character*, however, is compounded of many elements. And these elements are combined in different proportions, according to the condition, education, moral capacity and culture, of each man. In a Christian community the grand essentials attributed to the Divine Character will probably be Wisdom, Power, Goodness. Find these three in their perfect degree, and united in perfect balance with each other in a living Person, and that Person will be the Christian's God,—All-wise, Almighty, All-good.

But will not all conceptions of the Divine Character then, prevailing in this supposed community, be alike? No; because human conceptions of Truth, Power, Goodness, are relative. We can really know them only as they are in some measure in us. You will understand what Goodness is, just so far as something answering to that word is in your own heart and life, no farther. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned; *i. e.*, by spiritual faculties, which have to be disciplined and brightened in their own way, that is, by using them. This is the law. We can not climb up to the heights of this heavenly knowledge by some other way. It is not in any book, and no reading of any book will give it to us. It is not in any mystic charm or external force acting upon us. It is not in any nimbleness or energy of the intellect. To comprehend the love and truth of God we must, by religious aspiration, by experience, by our life, be true, be loving. In the measure that we do this; *i. e.*, in the measure that we receive God's Spirit, by faith and prayer and obedience, into ourselves, just in that measure shall we know God as He is. And so the degrees of that knowledge will vary with the shades of personal character.

The records of the religious sentiment and religious systems confirm this. There can always be traced a correspondence between the moral state of a nation and its worship. A slavish people will crouch before a despotic deity. Oriental indolence, its sinews softened by a luxurious climate, finding its highest joy in dreamy repose or mystical contemplation, adores an impersonated reverie floating on a lotus-leaf, cradled in water and darkness. Northern valor finds a god of warriors to worship,—a god of the muscles, of hardihood, of enterprise,—himself a supernatural leader, a hammer in his hand, frost for his breath, riding a swift steed, storms the sound of his steps. Gay and sanguine tribes look up to a heaven peopled by gods living in varied pleasures, feasting, hunting, sporting. Where human life is cheap and the passions are savage, human sacrifices are made to a bloody Baal or Typhon. Contrast the Mexicans and the Peruvians of the Western Continent. The former are cruel; they have sacred temples built of human skulls. The Peruvians are gentle, and they bring to the sun-god the fruits that his own genial light and warmth have ripened. Where men have not yet learned from science that nature is never their enemy, but always their friend,—and that even her fiercest moods and aspects are benignant, every feature of the barbarous mythology will reveal a superstition: tempest and rain and thunder will be the anger, and the tears, and the howl of a petulant monster deified.

Where the aspects of nature have been most alarming, and her forces most formidable, in regions of earthquakes, hurricanes, and ferocious beasts, putting man at the greatest disadvantage,—there superstition has been most degrading and religion most abject. It is in India that we find the adoration of a hideous deity "encircled by

a girdle of serpents, with a human skull in his hand, wearing a necklace of human bones, clothed in a tiger's skin, and a *cobra de capella* rearing its head over his shoulder." In the Greek mythology, on the other hand, where man was more free, and more equal to the physical conditions about him, the gods were personified generalizations of human qualities, or direct deifications of individual men,—which are there met with for the first time in religious history. Nor will these influences of human society on the conception of the Divinity be confined to Pagans. Throughout the history of monotheism, in the Bible and the Church of the One God, you may trace the plain lines of its operation. Periods of pastoral simplicity will see God as a Shepherd. Warlike ages will call upon Him to gird on His sword and go forth to battle. Commercial habits will contemplate Him as the Supreme Economist, the High Keeper of property. A scholarly community will think of Him as the Clearest and Strongest Mind. True disciples have learned of Jesus to serve Him as a spiritual Father, —a Spirit to be worshipped in spirit and truth. These instances might be multiplied without limit. To some extent culpably and shamefully, to some extent inevitably, we shape our heavens by our grade of spiritual life. As to character, God is what we look to as the best goodness embodied in an unseen Person.

So far no mention has been made of one great fact, affecting men's knowledge of God, which has altered the whole aspect of the world and the current of its religious history; viz., Revelation. Have we not a Book, given expressly to show us our Invisible Creator and, taking His existence for granted in its first sentence, to acquaint us with His dispositions, His Spirit, His character? We have such a Book; and that is precisely its ob-

ject; because, by showing us our God, the Bible knows it will furnish the mightiest and the only true motive-power that can draw us to Him: because it knows that when men shall really behold their Father in Heaven as He is,—every veil taken away,—when they shall fairly recognize His redemptive goodness, in its tenderness, depth, majesty, power, and beauty—at the cross—that moment disbelief and disobedience will be impossible; the *heart* of the world will be gained to faith, and the *life* of the world to righteousness.

Therefore it adopts every method of expression, every style known to literature—narrative, lyric, proverb, dialogue, drama, exhortation, epistle, treatise,—a most varied system of signs and symbols, pictures of peoples, fortunes of kingdoms, ceremonies of national religions, scenes of supernal manifestation, biographies of men and nations, direct declarations, all to acquaint us with God, to reveal to us, by so many combined voices and crosslights, Him whom it is the glorious fulfilment of our destiny to reverence, love, and serve.

But does this produce uniformity and enable every reader of the Bible thenceforth to behold the Holy One alike, in the plenitude and symmetry of all His perfections as He is? No. Spiritual truths can not be apprehended except by spiritual minds. The Revelation is perfect. But no mere words, however vivid and strong, no variety of signs, no printed page, no burning eloquence, can make us feel that which we have not in us the heart to feel, or to see that which we have not eyes to see, or to apprehend that which we have not trained our faculties to apprehend. The Bible will be understood by us according as our inward state resembles it. If there is no penitence, no spirit of faith, no love at all of it, in our breasts, then that will be a dead and unmeaning beati-

tude where we are told the pure are blessed and shall see God. If holy affections have not been kindled at all in us, or have been quenched by sensuality or social vanity, then we shall know no more of God after reading the words "God is Love" than before. Unless something in us opens to see it, and lays hold of it, Revelation will not in fact be a Revelation. It is possible to read over all that the Scriptures say, and yet be as ignorant of the real character or spirit of God, whom the Scriptures mean to reveal, as before. We must long to be better men or else we shall never know how God is good. We must try to be just, or we shall have faint and feeble notions of the Justice that is Divine. Pride will mislead us; self will mislead us; indifference, sensuality, falsehood will surely mislead us,—and all our views of God will be distorted and dark. Revelation is a glorious help to those that will come to it in its own spirit, earnestly, confidingly, seeking and working and believing just as far as they can. But to those who will not do this it is a volume of dark sayings, full of perplexities, contradictions, uninterpreted oracles. There, just as in the experimental knowledge of God, spiritual things are spiritually discerned. No miracle makes it otherwise.

By all this doctrine, to know God we must be, by faith and love, in communion with Him. Now, an objector may turn upon this course of thought and say, How am I to be in sympathy with God, or in any measure like Him, without first knowing Him? Yet you tell me to know Him by first being like Him. It looks like moving in a circle.

And so it would be but for one other truth; viz., that there is a Holy Spirit of God who comes to us to help, to quicken, and to sanctify. He takes the germ planted

in us by our Maker and nurtures it into a life with God. It may be covered up and stifled by the rubbish of a frivolous life or a selfish learning. It may be killed by giving the lower parts of our nature, like greediness or crafty calculation, an unbridled indulgence. But if it is cultivated it must be by the appointed means which the Holy Spirit brings and which Christ in His Church provides. And so both statements are true. We are to know God by trying to resemble Him in our spirit and life: we shall resemble Him more and more in our spirit and life, the better we know Him. Knowledge and practice complete each other. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect" still sounds forth its lofty call to us from the Saviour's lips. Yet how shall we ever climb to the sight of what that perfect Father is, save as we put each feeblest feeling we have for Him into instant action in His service, turn every dim aspiration into a righteous deed, and translate our slowly increasing faith into a devoted life?

This brings our Christian progress under one principle with other kinds of growth, and sets religion into rational analogy with all nature and all life. Take any department of knowledge depending both on study and experiment. There must be a degree of knowledge to initiate the experiment. Yet the moment the experimental course is begun, it increases knowledge, clears up and fixes principles, promotes discovery. So of any practical art. You may say a man must understand agriculture to be a farmer,—or mechanism to be a machinist. Yet it is just as true to turn it about and say that to understand agriculture he must be a farmer, and he must be a machinist or must run machinery to know mechanism. And the more he does the one the better can he do the other. The deeper you descend into the

holy meaning of the life that now is, the more your soul is cleansed, the more completely prayer sanctifies every plan, pursuit, and word and disposition, so much the more will you reach up to see and know that lofty One who inhabiteth eternity. And, in turn, the more wisdom you bring back from your silent vision and communion with God so much the more humility, truthfulness, uprightness, courage, generosity shall you have for use among men.

Here is a motive to righteous living,—that we may know more and more of God. To know God: think by yourself what this shall be—to know God. Goodness leads up to that: to know Him higher and higher, deeper and deeper, wider and wider, forever and forever. Faith shall bring you to that,—as sure as there is promise, or law, or truth, or God, at all. Let simple, honest faith in Him—Christ—who comes to reveal God and to kindle and nourish this spiritual life within you only begin; give it room to grow; feed it on your Master's words, His holy counsels, His Sacramental Body and Blood, and then you are ascending already to the knowledge of God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Then every sincere endeavor to conquer a fault will, in the wonderful transmutation of the inward man, bring out into clearer outline before your sight the face of your Father. Then every firm resistance of temptation will lift a little that veil that hangs over the mysteries of Providence. Then every victory gained by conscience over low customs or bad fashions or the heat of the blood or the haste of the tongue will brighten by so much the dark things that puzzle the understanding in the Book of Life and the ways of God. Your acquaintance with His ways will depend on the way your own feet move.

Then, finally, transposing means and end, you have a motive to study the character of God; viz., that you may be followers and imitators of God, as children of a father. In nature, in history, in life, in books, in the Bible,—you will study the character of God. What new earnestness, dignity, interest, it must lend to learning! What new ease to labor! What charms to sacrifice! What inspiration to duty! For, imagine as we will that it is enough to abstain from offending men, yet the foremost *power* of that abstaining will still be, "Thou God seest me." And imagine as we will that all our duties are outward to this world, yet the first of all the commandments is still, and ever will be, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." And if the troubled understanding uneasily asks again, "Where is thy God?" and "What good thing shall I do that I might inherit eternal life?" Faith still makes her profound, practical answer, "Thy God is here, wherever thou art"; and "This, O Father, is life eternal,—that they might know Thee, the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

HUMAN AND DIVINE FRIENDSHIP.

Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity.

"A MAN that hath friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—*Prov.* xviii. 24.

IN the two members of this double declaration there is found what may be called without any over-statement a comprehensive doctrine of Christian friendship. It is a subject not very often alluded to in the pulpit; so that it would hardly be strange if there should be a popular impression that it has nothing to do with the august matters of public religious instruction. We shall not need to labor long to contradict that notion if you will bring to mind a few unquestionable facts; as that Christianity is a failure in the world if it is incapable of penetrating and regulating all the parts of our personal feeling and action; that, inasmuch as their friendships occupy with most people a considerable share of both the attention and the interest of life, if the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus does not reach and control them then we shall have a large district of heathenism, full of offence and full of peril, lying in the very midst of our Christian estate; further, that the effect of these friendships is, in many cases, of so much power both for good and for evil that nothing in us requires the guidance of Christian principle more urgently than they do; also that Christ Himself had His human friendships, and cherished them;

that Paul the Apostle with his stern sense of public duty had them, as appears from his affectionate and tender messages to his friends at Philippi in the Epistle for this day; and finally, that all the analogy of Scripture leads us to a belief that every true friendship, *i. e.*, every one that has a Christian character on both sides of it, survives the material body, shares the soul's immortality, and reappears beyond the Resurrection, the occasion of an everlasting joy.

"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly." That is, it is a principle of mutual interchange and mutual sacrifice. There can be no one-sidedness, no selfish engrossment, no taking without giving. Selfishness is the death of social reciprocity and sympathy, as it is of piety to God. It is one of a Christian man's *duties* to have friends; and, to that end, to show himself friendly; to draw them and hold them by going out of himself towards them; to win them as Christ wins His Bride the Church, by disinterested affection; to be joined to them as the common members of one Body are joined to one another in the mutual attachments that have their source in the Head and Centre of Life; and so to make His friendships not the mere instruments of a selfish and thoughtless pleasure but one of the blessed spheres of a Christian service.

Because, in the next place, the other clause follows immediately on the former, and makes itself a portion of the whole truth: "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Here is yet deeper doctrine. We are transferred instantly from the ordinary plane of mere mortal attachments, which depend on so many accidents, and which contain at the best so many unworthy and unsatisfying ingredients, and which break at the blow of so many intermeddling and unhallowed hands,—to a

purer and more certain region. In the nearest intimacy, even that of brothers and sisters by blood, there is nothing so near as this. In the firmest and most faithfully pledged bonds of honor and love there is nothing so abiding as this. Christianity is not an abstraction, not a dry rule of living, nor is it an ideal that ever flies as we approach it, with no heart, no breath, no breast to lean upon and no words of fellow-feeling to keep up courage and hope. It is all in a person with every attribute of personal life and love. "There is a friend." This is a glory of the Incarnation. We have not only salvation but a Saviour; not only the *truth as it is in Jesus* but *Jesus Himself;* not only a cross but the Crucified; not only the "dying once," but Him who died living evermore; not only doctrines but our Master; not only precepts and parables but "Emmanuel." About all our other friendships there are some very easily-reached and sorely-felt limitations. There is a lack of knowledge in them; and we suffer from our friend's ignorance. There is a lack of sensibility; and what the tongue of one speaks with no thought of injury stings or crushes the spirit of another. There is a lack of patience; and affection itself, because it is human, neither beareth all things nor rises to the magnanimity of thinking no evil. There is a lack of strength or of skill; and the friend who has all the willingness and the desire to help us fails just at the point where help is most needed or, with honest goodwill, blunders into the plan that brings damage and distress. There is a limit to physical capacity, to health, to endurance, to life; and so, in the midst of the most gracious and blessed ministrations to sympathy, the ready foot falters, the eager hand droops, the loving eye is closed and the faithful watcher falls asleep. Turn then to the One Friend. His friendship never fails or disap-

points for lack of knowledge; weigh those marvellous words, which fifty generations have not been able to contradict,—"He needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." It never fails or disappoints for want of patience; for among all the millions of inconstant and unthankful souls that He has permitted to call themselves His friends there is not one but has wounded Him in some committed wrong or omitted remembrance; and yet, what one has He shaken off or given up, from the Peter that denied Him at the Judgment Hall to the innumerable Peters that denied Him last week in the face of fashion or mammon? It never fails or disappoints for want of skill, or strength, or endurance. How could it, seeing that it carries in its hand the very wisdom and power of God, puts all enemies under its feet, and having loved its own loves them unto the end? This is the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. He loves us before we love Him; and by so much as we keep farther and stay longer from Him makes costlier sacrifices to gain us. He is the Friend whose affection waits for no preference, or overture, or conciliatory obedience, that it may begin its wonders of grace; for it is while we are yet sinners that He dies for us. He loves us for no beauty; because to those eyes that had been used to look, before He left His glory to come seeking us, on the beauty of Heaven, there could be no loveliness in us to see. Beginning thus His love only grows with its own sacrifices, and spreads with the growing multitude of sinning souls to be saved, and brightens with the deepening darkness of the world that rejects and crucifies Him. I speak of failure and disappointment: but what need to reason about that till some one soul that ever trusted and accepted Him records the first testimony of a breaking of His promise, of hav-

ing come to Him and been cast out, of having trusted Him to be betrayed, or loved Him with an affection unreturned? There must be some here who looking back over their lives can recall this or that wonderful deliverance and say, He was by me then, and He delivered me then. He led me by a way that at the time I could not understand, but He led me on in it and made me understand it afterward. He girded me when I had not known Him; but this girding made me know Him at last; for as I walked by His side my heart burned in me, and His risen presence was revealed to me in the breaking of bread. When I wanted to follow Him for comfort, and to be made happy without being made strong or pure He stood so close to me, and loved me so much more deeply than all my other friends, that He humbled me, as He was Himself willing to be humbled; and He put a little of such suffering on me as He bore without measure; He purged me with fire; He healed my heated eyes with tears; He broke my tough heart with contrition,—suffering all the while Himself for me with pity more than I suffered with shame. How much more was all this than the love of a brother or sister, of father or mother, of wife or children! And how reasonable become His own mysterious words,—that whoso loveth any of these more than Him, to the denial or rejection or forgetting of Him, is not worthy of Him!

Putting together now these two declarations of the text,—that of the Christian lawfulness and mutual blessing of human friendship with that of the supreme attraction and fidelity of the divine friendship of the Saviour, we have the ground for two or three great practical principles of almost universal application. 1. The Christian guidance we need in the choice of friends and the formation of friendships; 2. The Christian test of every friend-

ship and every affection; and 3. the Christian direction how to hold and handle these friendships so that they shall bear their part and yield their fruit in the ripening of character and the eternal life of the soul.

I. First is the choice of friends and the formation of friendships. We use this dry mode of speaking, and there is sufficient sense in it to justify it. In point of fact, however, there is a feebleness in such language because it implies that friendships are generally a matter of forecast, whereas no such formal process takes place at all in one case out of a hundred. Friendships are rarely created by the will, or passed upon beforehand by the judgment. Every real friendship must be a growth, not a manufacture: it must spring out of a natural soil, and have a natural development, and must mature because the materials for it exist in both the parties. On the one hand is this notion, that people are to pick their friends as they do their books or their furniture. On the other is the more extensive and hazardous practice of leaving the whole matter, with all its sacred accountability, to the accident of circumstance, caprice, or position; interposing no solemn exercise of conscience or judgment till it is too late. Now the Christian rule, drawn from the principles already laid down, appears to be this: that personal acquaintanceships are safe and may be allowed to become intimate as the characters drawn together are moulded by the spirit of the friendship of Christ. Of course there can not be exact equality in spiritual attainments, in moral delicacy and scrupulousness, or in spiritual graces. The one party or the other must always enter into the alliance at some disadvantage; if one rise by it the other would seem at first to condescend in the same degree. But the requirement of duty is here: to suffer no very close or powerful sym-

pathies to spring up and gain ascendancy except where there is at least the root of a Christian faith and an honest purpose to lead a Christian life. The less formed the habits, the less guarded and settled the principles, and the earlier the age, the greater will be the importance of that security. Youth is self-relying, and in nothing more eager to trust itself, or more impatient to be let alone, or more sensitive against control, than in this very respect of choosing associates. It is full of all sorts of impulsive affinities, false chivalries, dreams of impossible power over others, and it is over-sure of its instincts. Later years are strewn with the sad remnants of hope and honor wrecked in these rash and perilous experiments. There are many things that we can not produce by the will which we can overcome or forestall by the will; and an intimate acquaintanceship is one of them. It is a question of moral life or death. There is a fatal poison in those irreligious enthusiasms where false sentiments, or personal fascinations, or unholy amiabilities, put on the garments of angels of light to undermine all the strong and sound foundations of faith first and virtue afterward. Nothing but misery comes that way at the last. You say, it may be, "But then, on this view, nobody but Christians can have a right to friendship." Very well. Your Bible told you long ago that nobody has a right to live without gratitude to his Father, and love to his Best Friend and Saviour, and faith in the renewing and comforting Spirit. Nor can any companionship or affection in the world be very high in its tone or lasting in its peace, however specious its pretensions, that is not rooted in devotion to Him who died to raise the world from death to life.

II. In the same doctrine is furnished us a test of all

our acquaintanceships already formed;—their rectitude, their influence, their safety, their character as before God, and in the anticipated light of the judgment. This newly-found friend of yours may have had no purpose to do mischief, no immoral habit, no conspicuous sin. But there was a wrong tone of the spirit; a lax estimate of religious duty and obligation; a mind pledged to the world and saturated with its atmosphere. Hence the lowering and dissipating influence began, and went gradually on; so gradually that it was not even perceived, but none the less steadily and surely for that. The former watchfulness declined. The reverence for things that God made holy decayed. The best treasure of the heart wasted and wasted day by day. The daily offering in Christ's name, which is the surest safeguard of every Christian life, was shortened, hurried, or forgotten. The appetite sprang eagerly to other pleasures. Perhaps there was a charm of kindness or intellectual superiority about the new face, or a kind of culture that concealed the danger. You plead impatiently against every remonstrance that these persons who are unconsciously despoiling you of your best love, and the only one that has any hold on eternity,—are generous, are upright, are humane, are accomplished. Grant it all: but think further and deeper than that. Not the best of them has died for you. Not one has left Heaven and become a servant for you. Not the most generous or blameless of them has given himself, resisting unto blood, striving against sin,—nor was there any divine power or virtue in the blood to take your sins away, if he had. Do not wrong and hurt the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Do not trifle with yourself. Be true to the first love and the holiest vow. Renounce the most attractive, flattering, fascinating friendship if God's voice

in you tells you it is doubtful whether it is to your soul's health, or is alienating you in the least from Him. The test is perfect and infallible. We need not break the charity that hopeth all things, or needlessly wound the heart from which we are obliged to draw away; there need be neither bitterness nor Pharisaism, neither condemnation nor assumption, in this fidelity; there can not be if the Master is in it. Christ Himself will help. God will guide. Perhaps He will make your faithfulness the very message and witness to that soul of His own awakening Spirit. At any rate, "If the Lord be on my side," you will say, "I will not fear what man can do. He will hide me in His pavilion, and set me up upon a rock. He sticketh closer than a brother. He alone is good. He alone is almighty. It is blessed to be lonely if so only I can be with Him. I owe all I am to Him; and all things are mine if I am His."

III. It is not difficult if we hold in mind these plain principles of Christian loyalty, to infer, finally, how these friendly relationships are to be used for their own noblest honor, for our real peace, and for the greater good of those we love. Holding our Christian friendships as from the Infinite Friend, prizing them as among the richest of His gifts, we can be sure we love each other aright when, for every exercise and office of that affection, both the friends love the unseen Friend the more. Human friendships are untroubled, lasting, satisfying, immortal, only as this is their secret law. The words of most sacred meaning need not be always on the lips. We often help each other most by unuttered and untraceable testimonies. Real sympathy has its own unlettered communications. The two men of different nations, each speaking and understanding only his own tongue, who were brought into a hearty fellowship the

moment one of them lifted his finger and eyes to heaven, symbolize the truth that human and divine love have one source. Show ourselves friendly as we will, there will be spots in even a Christian intercourse that seem to have more of discipline than of delight in them. We see *each other* as well as the world above only as through a glass darkly; and we stumble even in the paths that lead us into the sanctuaries of one another's hearts. What should we do, in such distresses, if it were not for Him who encircles all our errors and estrangements with His compassion; reconciling us to our miserable selves and to each other by bringing us all closer to Himself?

Bishop Heber mentions a courageous Christian youth in one of the Eastern persecutions for the Cross on whom the persecutors exercised a more than common share of their ingenuity of torment. After a long endurance of those tortures they released him, in wonder at his obstinacy. Even his Christian brethren wondered. When it was over they asked him by what strength he could so subdue the violence of fire as that neither a cry nor a groan escaped him. He said, "When they hurt me most I saw an angel with his finger pointed to heaven."

I sometimes think the form under which the persecuting anti-Christ of modern days is to vex the Church and seduce the innocent is by turning the social sympathies and admirations, and all the enthusiasms of the heart,—and especially of the young,—into tempters. God be with us when that hour comes! There is no reason why holy friendships should not themselves be among the mightiest of the ministers of grace. They will be if you choose them and try them and direct them by no romantic or shallow sentiment that vanishes in the face of real temptation, but by the strong and sweet nurture of

the Word of God and prayer; showing yourselves friendly with the brother you have seen for the sake of that elder and closer Brother whom you have not seen,—but whom, having not seen, you love; and whom it will be the first honor and joy of the life after death to see and to worship face to face.

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT.

Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity.

"THIS I say then: Walk in the Spirit."—*Gal.* v. 16.

As having a steady forward movement, as requiring not only an action of the will but purpose, strength and circumspection, the Christian life is very well conceived in figure as walking. St. Paul uses this image in to-day's Epistle, and in the text, and in many other places.

Suppose you who are gathered here, coming in from a world of action to think and pray awhile in this House of Peace, should ask this question:—"Is there any one great guiding principle of a man's life, rising up in manifest superiority over all others, standing out clearly, so definite and plain that I can lay hold of it and understand it, by which I can decide all the other questions about duty that rise and trouble me, day by day?"

It is not true, it seems to me, that most persons drift on with no personal anxiety at all as to their duty. In the South Sea Islands, or in Patagonia, that might be; but not here. Weak as it is, bad as it is, human nature is not dead enough or satanic enough for that,—let cynics or misanthropists say what they will. There are too many goads and whips stinging the most careless conscience to allow many of us to be utterly indifferent to this old and ever-pressing question, between "I ought" and "I ought not." Not only do the Bible, which we may sel-

dom open, and the sermon, which we may hear half asleep, or the Church, which we may cheat ourselves into thinking we are free to believe in or let alone as we please, solicit the soul; but the common talk of society, the text-books of education, the events of the day, the very scandals of the press, the retributions of politics, and the moral sufferings of family-circles stir it up, and will not let it alone. Much more does the eternal working of that Spirit of God within us,—too awful to be entirely put by, and loving us too well to leave us entirely to ourselves. So, one way or another, though you may be too proud to let it appear, or too easily carried away again by the outside world to let it come to any thing like a reformation of character, your heart is not satisfied with itself; there is a sad look on the face of the inner man; all is not going on well within you, and you know it—*feel* it. Life does not run as the rivers run, or play as the winds play. You say to yourself sometimes, "Am I living as I ought?"

Hardly any person is utterly isolated, or cut off from his kind. Hardly any body is without a set of relationships, reaching out towards different people, as, for instance, to an employer, or to a domestic servant, to clerks or other laborers employed, to each separate member of the family, to a fellow-lodger, or to a friend, to a pauper or rich neighbor, to a charitable association, or to some Church or society at large. Each one of these has some claim on your time, your attention, your sympathy, your help. To adjust and proportion these claims, so that none of them shall suffer, or so that one shall not swallow up another's share, is, to any conscientious mind, a source of serious solicitude, and just in the degree that we are better than brutes. It is only beasts or savages that herd together without mutual thought or voluntary

sacrifices. Then, again, there are the different parts of our own constitution. Each wants something; each demands a culture; some are clamorous and headstrong; some need more than others for the very reason that they are feeble, and can scarcely speak for themselves. A true man will find the management of his own inward forces no easy business; and yet the word *duty*, *accountability*, is written out somewhere, in pale ink or bright, on every faculty we have. One part must be lifted up, and another kept down; one must be urged forward and another held in. With some of us the intellect requires a constant spur or it sinks to sleep and lets the flesh overgrow it; with others it is the chief tempter and may be as ambitious as Lucifer or, with all its knowledge, as bitter and unbelieving as Mephistopheles. In some moods, the tendency to depression or despair has to be fought against in a tremendous battle, or else energy flags and the whole use of existence fails:—in others a perpetual levity threatens to turn this solemn gift of life into a contemptible harlequinade or a wearisome jest. In one temperament, the sensual passions are always lying in ambush to strangle every nobler or purer purpose: some low appetite smirches every high thought and corrupts those fair imaginations which ought to fly like doves with silver wings;—and how to chasten that appetite is an undiscovered secret. Will becomes wilfulness; firmness becomes obstinacy. With others some bodily infirmity would like to be forever petted and indulged. There is such a thing, too, as a refined and elegant fastidiousness of taste;—imagining it ought to be waited on at all costs of other people's comfort, which is one of the wickedest forms of selfishness in the world. Why, even the mere distribution of our time, on a Christian plan, giving every lawful interest its due, is no

slight puzzle in itself,—how much to this and how much to that, how much to business, how much to recreation, how much to one's household, and how much to the public. Shall a natural love of money or property lead on to a miserly laying up of every thing, with a poor, pinched style of living meanwhile;—or shall a natural prodigality spend as it goes, shiftlessly leaving the future to shift for itself? Rising higher, how much shall be given directly and specially to religion,—for the blessing it brings to yourself, and as a blessing to other men? What do you owe to the Church?

It is needless to go further to show, to those who believe—as we here all do,—that there is a God to be obeyed and a God that may be insulted, a way of life and a way of death, how the way of life is not easy to find. It is full of questions. The paths divide and diverge at all angles. We do not travel by trains. The apostle uses the more accurate word. It is a "walk,"—step by step—an individual, personal thing, with free choice, continual effort, and an onward movement. If it is to be worth any thing, if it is to come to any thing noble here, or immortal hereafter, life is costly. We must pay; we must think; we must watch and work, and perhaps suffer. These troublesome questions are a part of the price. We are equal to it, not in our own strength but by a Power given us from above. What is the Power? Where is the Guide? To have the life that is glorious and eternal,—all its failures forgiven, and its end perfect,—perfect victory and perfect peace,—we must "walk" —in what way? We come back to St. Paul.

He answers, "This I say then, Walk *in the Spirit.*" He is positive and peremptory. There is no uncertainty. His mind was made up long before: not a quiver or stammer of doubt about it. He is confident, and clear.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit." There *is* one way to take and follow. There *is* a guide for this life. There is one question to which all the other questions can be brought; and practically the answer to this will be the answer to them all. It may not be quite as clear to us as it was to the Apostle; and therefore it will be well for us to try to make it as clear as we can.

Walking is living; it is our life's movement forward in this world. But how that shall be "in the Spirit" is what we want to know more perfectly.

And here, as often happens, we are helped by contrasts. Throughout all this writing to the Galatians, and through all his preaching of the Gospel of Christ, we find this grand expounder of it pointing out two opposite forces in the nature of every man. He has various names for them,—"the law of the members and the law of the mind,"—"the old man and the new man," —but oftenest "the flesh and the spirit." It is popular language: we all know well enough what he means, not because the terms are precise, but because we are all conscious of having in ourselves the two things,—if not always at work or at war yet *always there*, ready to start up at any time and renew their battle. Take notice, the New Testament never says that the worse force of the two is *wholly* evil, or the better one *wholly* good. If the Gospel were a directory of ascetic discipline, written by a Gnostic philosopher, or a treatise tinctured by any of those half-pagan speculations which set a bad god over against a good God, and divide the universe between them, giving the soul to the bright Deity and matter to the dark One, and which then bring down the same dualism into man, putting his *spirit* under the power of the good God and his fleshly body under the bad, then the religion of the New Testament would

not be Christianity at all, and Paul would not be a Christian. The Gospel does teach everywhere that the spirit in man is the natural organ of what is highest and best in him, while the flesh is the natural organ of what is lower,—the one connecting with the spiritual world above us, the other with the world below. St. Paul, does preach, plainly, and with all his might, that there is a struggle of each of these two forces for the mastery, —the spirit lusting against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit, these two contrary the one to the other. It is a desperate fight, till the right one gets the upper hand and rules: till then, "O wretched man that I am." Let the spirit rule, let the *diviner part* decide all the open questions, and the man becomes spiritually-minded. All things belonging to the spirit live and grow in him. He *walks* in the spirit. Let the flesh rule, or have its own way, instead of holding its lawful place as a servant, let it bring the rest down and force them to yield to its impulses, and gradually the whole constitution is dragged into anarchy. The image of God fades out. The man *walks* in the flesh, till finally you see scarcely any thing else but the flesh walking. Not that there will always be the external signs of sensuality about him—a bloated frame, gross features, or a sensual look. These belong only to one kind of animalism. There are other kinds, where the inward corruption makes very little mark on the surface. There is a "fleshly mind." There is the waste of idleness, the cold-blooded selfishness, the lean consumption of avarice, the burning out of all sound substance by ambition, or the mad vanities of dress and jewelry, the dissipation of sheer excitement, without gluttony or wine. But there are only two ways anywhere. It is one thing or the other. If we are not living in the spirit, we are liv-

ing as part and parcel of a material world, which then overgrows and stifles the spirit, absorbs all interests into its outside show and passional comforts, then runs down, perishes, and has no immortality but the lingering one of the second death.

If it is inquired then, What is our spiritual life? it is that within us which feels God to be a Father, which seeks and follows what is good in itself, which chooses what is lovely in conduct and generous in judgment, which tests friendships by their purity, and pursuits by their righteousness, which has faith in the unseen, which worships, which is touched and sometimes enraptured by the beauty of holiness. The spirit is that in us which would rather suffer than do wrong, and rather be crucified than mistake Cæsar for the Saviour, or Mammon for its Maker. It would choose truth before falsehood, no matter what bribe is put into the balance with the lie. It is that by which we forgive injuries, and confess our own sins, and are willing to be made poorer for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, and take in the glorious sense of the encomium on charity in the thirteenth to the Corinthians, and are lifted up by the Sermon on the Mount mountain-high. It is that by which we cling to the Church as a mother, and find her sacraments gracious and precious. It is that in us with which the whole Revelation of the Gospel takes sides. It is that which the Spirit of God regenerates, and raises up to boundless power and everlasting gladness. In other words, it is the life of the Holy Ghost, the Third Person in the blessed Trinity, given through Christ, dwelling and ruling in us by faith, and making us new creatures in Him.

If now we turn to any of those practical questions, where we try to steer our course by some fixed light, we shall find that here is an answer that covers them all.

Keep the spiritual nature uppermost. Give the spiritual man the advantage. Settle every account in the spirit's favor. In almost every such difficulty there will be these two sides. One way will incline to self-pleasing, the other to self-denial. One way has the bodily senses for its advocates, fashion for its certificate, and worldly position for its reward. The other way was taken by the saints whose names in history are like stars in the night; it is quite as apt to lie in the solitudes beyond Jordan as in the streets where multitudes shout hosannas: its reward may be nothing else than being in a minority, yet on the same side with God. But everywhere alike, for poor men and rich men, feeble people and strong, the ignorant and the knowing, it is *the way*. "Walk in the Spirit." It will not make every thing convenient, or merry, or prosperous. There may be mistakes of judgment; life may seem like a strain of bad music pitched to a minor key; your ideals may not be attained. Never mind that. The voice rings out over all the contradictions and ruins, "This I say then, walk in the Spirit." "To be spiritually minded is life and peace,"—life now, and peace at last.

On this high ground of interpretation, it matters little whether we understand by "the Spirit," the Holy Spirit in Himself, or the same Spirit in the breast of the believer. The power is the same, whether we meet it in the Person of the Comforter brooding over us, or giving light and strength in the new temple of the consecrated heart. The Apostle's thought passes rapidly, to and fro, from the one to the other, even as the Renewer Himself passes,—like the wind that bloweth where it listeth. A spiritual mind is the life of God in the soul of man. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

There is another contrast still. St. Paul, through all

this passage, has in mind not only a comparison of the spiritual mind with the sensual and selfish mind, but of the life lived in the Spirit and a life which looks somewhat like it, but at heart, under the surface, is a very different thing:—*i. e.*, a life lived under a set of rules formed by external regulations, fashioned, pieced together, cut and dried by the law. You know how determined his assaults were always, in every sermon and every epistle, from his conversion at Damascus up to his martyrdom at Rome, on the system which sees nothing in religion but rule. The reason is that in a character shaped by outside rules you will never have any thing deeper than an outside piety. It will not be character at all, but only the shell of it. We have a great many Jews among us without a drop of Hebrew blood in their veins. They avoid forbidden sins *because* they are forbidden,—forbidden by respectability, or custom, or fear of penalty,—not because they are hateful to God and *are sins*. They practice certain virtues, imitating some pattern of moral propriety, and keep decent till they are tried in a new spot, or under cover of darkness, or where the rule has not been laid down. The heart of love has not begun to beat, the Spirit of Christ has not begun to breathe in them. A whole nation of men, calling themselves God's people, and children of the prophets, but bound and stiffened and iron-clad in that delusion, were a frightful spectacle. The Apostle saw that it must go down, or the Kingdom of Heaven could never come. Loving Christ with a divine passion, he must preach Him as He is, whether Rome or Israel, Emperor or Pharisee, resisted. The religion of Jesus is a principle of freedom, not a yoke of bondage. Whoever would be a Christian must be one heartily and cheerfully, not grudgingly or of necessity. The Christian life must spring and bubble up from

within, not be fitted on from without. The disciple must choose it and long for it. Its first principle is faith. That is, there must be such a personal union of the soul with the Son of God that the most natural and every-day impulse will be to do Christlike things, to treat others with Christlike charity, to take care of Lazarus whatever becomes of Dives, to pity the penitent whatever Simon may say, to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. This life of Christian liberty will be walking in the Spirit. Uprightness in dealing, charity for all weakness, reverence for the mysteries of the faith,—these are its spiritual graces,—powers of the world that now is, and powers of the world to come. It is supernatural, born in the Church, nourished by her mysteries and sacraments.

This is the drift of the whole grand passage,—Christian life and Christian freedom, and both by the spirit. "So then, brethren, ye are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free." "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father." There is no disparagement of Churchly order. The richest spiritual graces flow in ordained channels. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free, ye are all one in Christ." Let there be no abuse then of the great privilege, as if freedom were license. The doctrine is as *holy* as it is *broad*, and the Church must be as clean as it is Catholic. "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Even in the things of religion, too much of the outside, too much of rule and form and

pomp, makes a sensuous worship. "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." "If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law."

Then we see again Ebal and Gerizim:—the barren mount of curses,—the green slopes and summit of the hill of life. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest," —and there follows the horrible, cursed catalogue. And then rises, like a sweet hymn after screams of demons from the pit, the Benediction—a harmony woven together of the names of spiritual graces:—"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:—against such there is no law."

THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE.

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."—*I Thess.* ii. 13.

This name, the Word of God, is one of the most common, most ancient and most accurate titles of the Bible. In the Epistle to-day St. Paul refers the Colossians, for the origin of their faith, hope and love to "the Word of the truth of the Gospel" which is come unto them as to all the world, one and the same Word of God. It is a name to be especially valued for this, that it carries with it the doctrine that the Bible is one whole, proceeding from one Author,—having one great subject and one great object. The same sentence pronounces another characteristic of this Word,—its exact adaptation to the wants of man:—"which effectually worketh also *in you* that believe." These two points of the text,—the *design* of the Bible, or its relation to human nature, and the *unity* of that design, or its relation to itself, as one work of the Spirit,—form our subject.

What is meant, and what is not meant, by the *unity of the Scriptures?*

In any thing that has organic unity, all the different parts, however many they may be, and however unlike they may be to one another, are yet so related to-

gether, as organs, that every one of them is essential to the integrity and completeness of the whole.

This needs illustration. In the human body there is a variety in the parts which is wonderful,—much greater than persons who have never attended at all to anatomy commonly suppose,—variety as to the substance, form color, size, hardness, and service of these parts. But you can not take the most insignificant part away, not one of all these bones, or veins, or ligaments, or tissues, without affecting the unity of the body. Something will be wanting that ought to be there to make it a whole. Hence, notwithstanding the diversity and multitude of ingredients just spoken of, we speak correctly of any animal body as one thing. The Mind that created it created every smallest part with reference to every other part. He had one design, and every piece of flesh and drop of blood and speck of bone contributes to that design.

Turn to a heap of sand. Here is no such unity of parts, or unity of purpose. One particle has no necessary relation to the other particles. You take away one or two or twenty of these loose and separate grains; you make the heap a very little smaller, but that is all. You inflict no damage by what you remove on what you leave behind. The particles did not *grow* together. They might have been brought together from fifty different sea-beaches. There is no internal law amongst them, except simple attraction. There is no unity in this sand-heap.

The same difference can be still more strikingly shown in different states of a tree. The organic law of vegetable life makes every portion of the tree, the bark and wood and sap and leaf,—from the lowest extremity of the root to the topmost extremity of the boughs,—one

whole, in spite of all the diversities in the parts. The tree has unity. But cut the tree down, saw and split it into timber or firewood, and then lay these pieces together,—no matter how regularly,—the unity is lost. Each piece is a piece, and nothing more. What made them *one* is gone.

But again, take the pieces of timber; shape them in a particular way so as to fit them for each other; put stones and lime and water and iron and oil with them; and let these also be fitted to each other, according to a particular design in some mind, so as to make a building. Here we have a kind of unity again, though not internal life, because the parts are all made to bear a relation to one another, with one object, as before. There is not life exactly, but there is a oneness to the whole. You look at the house or the temple, and you say it is *one thing.*

These examples make it plain what organic unity is in any production of the mind,—whether the mind of God or the mind of man. Remember, however, two qualifications. While it is said here that every portion is essential, it is not said that every portion is essential to the bare existence, or the life, of the thing. A tree will live with one or two of the branches or roots cut off. A body will live, sometimes, after amputation or mutilation. What is affirmed is this: every part is in the original law of the thing, and is essential *to the completeness* of the thing and to its best and most profitable use.

Further, all the parts are not of equal importance, or important for the same object. It is not so in a machine, or a house, or a plant. What we say is that every part is necessary to the integrity of the whole, and in order that the whole should fulfil its true end.

If the Bible has this unity; if it all came from one

Personal Spirit, as one complete, finished and perfect whole, with one grand design; if every part of it has some real and vital connection with every other part, and with that grand design; if it is such that you can not tear any portion out without vitally hurting the integrity and authority of it all as one Book, then indeed is the Bible what the common reverence and wisdom of the Church have declared it to be,—an immortal guide to an immortal peace, the bulwark of our welfare, the corner-stone of our civilization, the charter of civil liberty, the anchor of all our hopes, the everlasting Law of Life, the indestructible "Word of God." If the Bible has not this unity, then human reason may take it to pieces, like the useless links of a broken chain, may scatter the pieces apart, may sit in judgment on each one, may throw any of them away, may grind the whole of them to powder, and mix the powder with the common dust of the earth, or cast it into the sea or on the wind. That process was begun, or rather the experiment was tried, long ago. It has been tried over and over again in every age since the Bible was a book. But the Church has held the Bible fast, and kept it one.

Wherein does this unity of the Scriptures consist? Not, certainly, in the absence of variety or diversity in the parts. We have already seen that the greatest possible variety, as in buildings and plants, is entirely compatible with the strictest unity. No book ever written approaches the Bible in the diversity of its contents, whether as to the topics treated, the periods and methods of composition, the states of society reflected, the range of illustration, the breadth of allusion, the kinds of character presented, or the nameless peculiarities of style and treatment. The unity of the Bible is not the simple unity of a blade of grass, a Doric column, or a

single portrait. It is rather like the unity of nature herself, in all the universe of her manifestations, the inexhaustible variety of her operations.

Look a moment at this remarkable diversity of the Scriptures to bring out, by contrast, into a more striking and impressive light their unity. There, first of all, is the division into two Testaments, which are stamped respectively with the characteristics of two very unlike dispensations or economies of divine dealing, having several centuries of time lying between the close of the one record and the opening of the other. Then there are in all more than threescore different books put together, with a company of human writers almost as large. These volumes were produced in states of society, education and manners utterly dissimilar to one another,—ranging from Syrian simplicity, Egyptian serfdom, and Babylonian captivity, to the great august dynasties and flowering culture of empire and learning, east and west. These compositions appeared at unequal intervals in ages stretching over a vast period of some fifteen hundred years. The history of events narrated covers between three and four thousand years;—*i. e.*, from the creation to the point where Thucydides and Herodotus take the oriental story up. They are in three original languages, belonging to three distinct families of tongues, and all of them now dead. Notice, next, the diversity in the kinds and styles of literary production. Here are chronicles and biographies, poems and statistics, pastorals and statutes, epithalamiums for weddings and lamentations for the dead, elegies and songs of victory, anthems and genealogical tables, travels and parables, apologues and fables, maxims and allegories, dialogues and treatises, letters, debates, speeches, predictions, ascriptions, oracles. Each historian, teacher, singer or prophet, has a

stamp of his own, individual and characteristic, as clearly defined as that of any person we meet. Of the four evangelists that record the earthly life of the Saviour, for instance, each one is so different from the others that the collation of them has created volumes of criticism. Among the Apostles that open to us the mind of Christ, and fix the organization of His Church, there are dialectic Paul, ardent Peter, contemplative John. Their epistles, addressed to Churches in different kinds of experience, are as special as most letters of friendship,—from the peerless splendor of that to the Hebrews to the loving confidences of the beloved of the Twelve,—from the magnificent demonstration of "the faith that justifies," for the Romans, to the pure and evangelical morality of St. James,—from the triumphant and jubilant congratulations for the Ephesians to those tender and searching counsels addressed to the pastors and bishops of the newly gathered flocks, and the sublime unfoldings in the apocalypse of the things that are to come hereafter, when the seals are opened, within the gates of the New Jerusalem and by the sea of glass. Such are some of the instances of variety in this one Word of God.

For, after all, it *is* One Word. Underneath and throughout all this diversity of gifts in the writing and speaking, under this difference of administration, and these divergencies of operation, that Word is marvellously single. Let us see in what this unity consists. First, it is a unity of doctrine. As to the being, personality and providence of God the Father, as to the history, character, and offices of God the Son, as to the nature, gifts and works of God the Holy Ghost, as to man's origin, sin, recovery and destiny, as to his regeneration, redemption and retribution, as to the constitution and glory of the Church, as to holiness of life and the communion

of saints, this book teaches, by all its voices, one thing, substantially the same everywhere. From the account of the creation and the Creator to the vision of the celestial city, it is only the divine declaration of that faith, the Evangelic Creed, of which the Apostles' Creed is the epitome,—God instructing us, by His own Word, to believe in Him as "the Father Almighty," and so with every other article, to the "Life Everlasting." This binds all together, as a single work, in the unity of the Father.

There is also a unity of the Scriptural History, proceeding straight from the first man, by his patriarchal descendants, by the one chosen nation and its varying fortunes, expanding afterwards into that broader family of Gentile nations scattered over the world, all visited with the "Light to lighten" them, and then regathered before the Throne of Heaven at the final consummation: —one rounded and perfect historic whole.

There is also a unity of prophecy and the fulfilment of prophecy. The predictions run on from that early one on the threshold of Eden, that the seed of the woman should come to bruise the serpent's head, through different parts of the volume, including much special and minute foretelling, till the mysteries of another life are foreseen in the Isle of Patmos. So the fulfilments begin almost immediately, as in the flood foretold to Noah, and extend to the conclusion, where the serpent's head *is* bruised by the power of the Messiah, who *is* the woman's seed, and the millennial deliverance is accomplished. Throughout, prophecy and fulfilment are woven together in crossing lines, like the warp and woof of a fabric. Either part is a riddle and a failure without the rest:—put all together and it is one harmonious, luminous whole,—no creation of human genius in all the world so beautiful.

Furthermore there is the unity of types and the realities answering to them,—which is another kind of prophecy, only written in the language of real things and living persons or events, instead of the language of words. One portion of the Bible will tell us about men, or places, or acts, or ceremonies, of which we do not see half the significance till we turn over or read on to a distant part of the record; and there, in another writing, by another hand,—because it is the self-same Spirit of Inspiration that worketh all in all,—we find the full and larger meaning, interpreted in the later light of the Gospel, in the fulness of times. Thus we understand the sacrificial blood of Abel and his accepted offering in the fourth chapter of Genesis, only when we read the story of Calvary by the Evangelists. We understand the Deluge and the Ark only when Christ and His apostles show them as a type of the washing of Holy Baptism in the Christian Church. We have only begun to learn what Abraham and Isaac, what Egypt and Babylon, what Moses and Sinai, what Joshua and Jordan, what the altar and the Priesthood, what David the king and Elijah the forerunner, what the manna, and the Red Sea, and the brazen serpent lifted up, and the circumcision, and a thousand other prophetic facts of the Old Testament really mean, when we behold them all appearing again in the Scriptures of the New, and their secret sense brought out to light. It would take a volume to give a complete impression of this typical unity of the Bible. As plainly as the two dispensations of Law and Grace imply and require one another, so does each division of the Scripture need the rest to interpret and perfect it.

A similar correspondence might be shown to exist between many of the characters, and their biographies, in

the earlier Scriptures and those in the later. We find references, metaphors, names, allusions, in the Epistles, which would be quite unintelligible if we did not go back and read the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Prophets. It is one system, one order, one design, in the mind of the one God, by whose inspiration it is all given.

But, after all, there is one clearer, stronger, and more vital bond of unity between these diverse portions of the Scriptures than any of these. Among all these agreements and harmonies there is one Living Person, who harmonizes them in Himself. Out from all these groups of Biblical characters, and above them, looks forth one face, human in its features, divine in its glory,—a face of sorrow yet of brightness unspeakable, marred more than the countenance of any man, yet the Light of the world,—drops of human tears and blood upon it, yet "as the sun shining in His strength." Central to all this wondrous universe of Scripture signs and symbols stands the Saviour's Cross, with the unbroken tables of the broken Law leaning against its foot. Yes: the unity of the Bible is Jesus Christ. He binds all its parts together. He makes all its apparently least connected portions one. He is its inward life,—making it the Book of Life to us,—as much as the blood in the veins is the life of the body:—Christ the example to men by His life; Christ the Redeemer by His Cross; Christ the eternal and ever-living Head by the power of His personal presence in His people; Christ the one great Prophet, Priest and King; Christ who was the pastoral patriarch's Chief Shepherd, and whose day Abraham saw; Christ who was the Spiritual Rock of which the Church of Moses in the wilderness drank; Christ whom the prophets saw and predicted in His great humility

on earth, yet on a throne high and lifted up in Heaven; Christ the companion of evangelists and leader of apostles; Christ the Alpha and Omega of the Apocalypse, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, the Lord of the first and of the second advent.

All the long and distant periods of *time* are one in Him, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. The two Testaments, divided now no longer, are hemispheres of a globe, like the two portions of the brain in the body of man. The Law is the schoolmaster teaching for Christ. Pentateuch, Psalms, Prophets, are a store-house of imagery to illustrate the mysteries of redemption,—shadows of a new and better covenant after the old has vanished away. The city of the great King is built for David's greater Son, and reappears in the "Jerusalem which is above and free, the mother of us all." The altar of a daily sacrifice stands, till the Lamb taketh away sin once for all, that every believer might daily bear about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. And for that taking away of sin, whether the priest be Aaron or Emmanuel, without the shedding of blood is no remission. Leviticus is evangelical, as well as the Epistle to the Galatians. Isaiah and Zechariah chant in the same grand chorus with Matthew and Mark and Luke and John. The seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head appears at Eden as well as in Gethsemane. Shiloh stands, in the peace of his blessed promise, by Jacob's dying bed. The Saviour moves, a Jehovah-angel, before the tribes, above the ark of propitiation where the typical blood is sprinkled, as He does in the streets of Jerusalem, from the judgment-hall "without the gate." David tunes his harp to the Messiah "made lower than the angels" for the suffering of death. Daniel shows the form of

the Divine Sufferer in the fiery furnace, as clearly as Stephen, the Christian proto-martyr, sees Him in the opened heavens. Haggai discerns "the desire of all nations," with the apostle who preaches Him to the Gentiles. From end to end holy men speak of Christ as they are moved by the Holy Ghost, and on to the last strains of the visions at Patmos the voice of testimony and praise, the glorious Scriptural *magnificat* rises higher, till it blends with the noise as of many waters, the praise of the multitude that no man can number before the throne, where are the rainbow and the lightnings and the thunders,—the sea of glass and the seven lamps of fire,—the white-robed elders and the crowns of gold. There, in the midst of the twelve, stands a "Lamb as it had been slain,"—"Slain from the foundation of the world,"—the "Bright and Morning Star,"—"the Lion of the tribe of Judah,"—"the Root and the Offspring of David," before David and after David, a greater King, King of kings, who openeth the book and no man shutteth. And they sing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the seals thereof, for Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." And you hear, from ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!"

We ought to glance at one difficulty. You say you can not *see* the connection of some parts of the Bible with its great end and principal object. There are passages, and even one or two books, so apparently detached from the main drift that you find it difficult to trace the links which join them in with the rest

of the volume or with the inspired means of man's salvation. It is very likely to be so; and it is just what we ought to have expected in a message sent by the Infinite and Almighty Father to a shortlived and ignorant child,—a child that can see only a very little way before and after in any matter, much more in the plans and purposes of his Creator,—while the message itself is meant for all time, for all lands, for all possible conditions of society, and for all generations of souls. If you were to have certain lumps of mortar, or pieces of timber, which belong to this building, separated from the edifice and brought to you to examine in some remote spot, you, not being an architect, or a carpenter, or a mason, would probably confess that you could not see what relation or use they bore to the structure. A young child sees no use in half the things that the grown-up world deems quite necessary to keep society safe and strong. Because you do not see the connection, you will not by any means, if either sense or modesty remains in you, conclude that no connection exists. Could you see as the *inspiring Spirit* sees, you would acknowledge that either to the narrative, or the moral impression, or the spiritual power, either directly or indirectly, to some time, past, present or future, to the whole Book and the whole work it was to do, this very part was an essential contribution. Take care, then, how you discredit or set aside any words from that which is the one whole Word of God. Where you are too weak to comprehend you can humbly reverence and adore.

You may say, again, that some parts are unedifying. This is in the same spirit of assumption; for it lets your fallible and narrow experience set a limit to the unmeasured realm of susceptibility and edification

in all the souls that ever lived or ever will live. Because you get more help and light and strength from some parts of the Bible than others it does not follow that differently constituted persons would get none from those others, or even that you would not, if you sought longer, and with more patience, and more prayer that your spiritual sight might be opened. "In a great house," says St. Paul, "there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth." These last are just as essential as the first, and, for their ends, just as honorable. And in the "great house" of God's Revelation all the words He speaks, in their fitness and strength and beauty, are "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Nor can we grant that any of these Scripture-words, however ordinary or unspiritual or distant from the springs of spiritual life they may appear to us, are actually fruitless of holy impression. The dew of the heavenly Hermon moistens the driest sentences among them; and when it pleases the Spirit to breathe and shine upon them, they bloom and glow with all the graces of the heavenly life. I remember meeting, in my reading of old times, with this testimony. A young man was listening, in a church, to the long list of names recorded in the fourth chapter of Genesis, of men who lived between Adam and Noah,—precisely one of those passages of which flippant modern skeptics are ready to say, "They are antiquated and outgrown, barren of all profit to our more illuminated age; away with them." Yet as this thoughtless student heard the verses of this old genealogical chronicle fall from the reader's lips,—quaint proper names of "dead men out of mind," they came to him in a new and solemn way; and, exactly as is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews of Abel, being dead they yet spake. He only heard it said of one antedilu-

vian after another that he was born, lived so long, died, and was buried. The young man considered it: so many men lived, died, and were buried. That is the sum, then, of human life. So it will be said some day of me,—"He lived, died, and was buried." Is that all, then? Is that the end? What comes beyond? *Why* do I live, and where shall I live after my body is buried? His thoughts ran on even into the Valley of Decision, till he came to be a new creature in Christ Jesus. Afterwards this holy scholar wrote and sent abroad works that wakened and refreshed the spiritual life of multitudes. That dry succession of texts became a fountain of living water in the desert. And so, if we knew the inner life of all men, we should doubtless find it to be with every sentence of Scripture.

We have seen the fitness of every portion of God's Word to the real wants of the human soul in some stage of its varied experiences;—*i. e.*, the relation of the Bible to man. We see also its relation to itself,— *i. e.*, its inward agreements and unity as a whole. Each line of thought, in its own way, deepens and fixes our faith in all its blessed authority as the Word of God. The very terms we take to designate it convey at once this *diversity*, and this *unity*. We call its words God's *words*, in the plural; yet, by a sure confidence, treating them all as a *single* utterance, we say, "The *Word* of God." It is made up of many books; yet we say "the Bible," or one "Book" of books. There are so many distinct writings, or Scriptures; yet "Holy Scripture" is the title of the one whole.

Will you wonder that such a Book lives on, with immortal and ever-expanding vigor, though every thing earthly fails? The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, every autumn the leaves drop and the glory of the fashion

of them perisheth; but the Word of our God shall stand forever. Because the Gospel is a world's Book the world wants it and means to keep it, against the robberies of all rationalistic thieves, and the hammers of all destructionists. Made for man, and given to man, by the Maker of man, it will last as long as man lasts.

Remember then, carefully, these two things. The province of a true, reverential, Scriptural learning, or criticism in the Church, is to investigate the contents, the meaning, and the history of these Scriptures, not to sit in judgment on their value, or authority. All that is settled. They are not the word of men, but of God. When the hands of the Church gathered and arranged them in the canon,—first the Old Testament and then the New,—the mind of the Church was directed by the same Spirit that inspired them. He has watched and kept them ever since, and will keep them forever. Whoever denies them only darkens his own soul, and robs the world of its best Lamp, while he affronts his Lord.

Finally, understand why we read the whole. If you hear men say this or that portion of the Scriptures is not necessary, or belongs to a bygone age, or does not help them: here is your answer, given you by St. Paul himself, "*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect,"—complete, as Scripture is complete,—"and thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The objection is superficial; the answer is profound. Hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest it all, as belonging to one divine, gracious, blessed Bible.

Love more deeply the Church, for giving so constantly and richly to her children, in all its parts, this heavenly

food, this inestimable treasure, this perpetual feast. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

CHRIST'S CALL TO THE PERSONAL HEART.

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

"The Master is come, and calleth for thee."—Taking in the foregoing sentence the whole passage reads:—"She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister, secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee."—*St. John* xi. 27, 28.

It is often found in the New Testament that the way and words of Christ with some single individual represent, as in miniature, His grander approach to the whole family of men and His message to humanity at large.

Two sisters and a brother made up a household in the village of Bethany. The occasion of their being known to us is that they very early and heartily gave their trust and love to Jesus of Nazareth. What secret hand it was that touched the spring and drew their confidence and sympathy to Him who found so few to understand Him, the narrative leaves untold. Perhaps it was a reverent religious training in their childhood; there is no surer preparation to make ready for the Lord's entrance into any heart or any home. Perhaps it was a spiritual refinement and simplicity wrought in them by suffering, —for they seem to have been orphans:—and most of us know, all of us are at least in a school for learning, the transforming power of trouble. At any rate, these watchers for the Messiah in that Hebrew cottage seem to have

been gifted with an inner light to recognize Him: and so it has happened that the little dwelling there has become more illustrious to Christendom all these hundreds of years than any family save that of Nazareth itself in the world. The town is designated in the history as the town of Mary and her sister Martha, their piety illuminating its situation. It was reason enough why He who had many miracles to work, and a whole Race to redeem, should leave His other errands and come thither to lodge, that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister and Lazarus." Elsewhere, as fast as this inward coming is realized by faith, the believer who welcomes Him, drinking of His cup, baptized with His baptism, and bearing the fruit of His works, ranks with the greatest of men. His highest honor is that his Lord abideth with him.

At the point of the history touched in the text two members of the family are mourning for the death of the third. The miracle of raising him from the grave, perhaps the sublimest in Christ's ministry except His own resurrection, is just about to be accomplished. There was a large company from Jerusalem, and the august demonstration of His divinity was to be publicly attested. Yet all this did not hinder that Christ should remember a particular individual there; that He should want *one person*, and send for that one. The magnificent errand of redeeming a Race never dulls His concern for a solitary soul. The message was, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Advent is at hand.

Making it this morning's message to ourselves we shall have for our subject *Christ's call to the Human Heart.* The line of thought will unfold itself through three principal steps, each one including a doctrine, an encouragement, and a duty. The call is *comprehensive*, it is *sympathetic*, it is *personal.*

In the two sisters, one of whom is made the bearer of the Lord's word to the other, we see,—what it is not very unusual to see, even within the narrow limits of a single household,—two sharply contrasted types of natural character. It is remarkable, in the few words the Gospel gives us about them both, how clearly defined these unlike portraits are. Beyond any of the great painters the evangelists, in their sketches of the persons that are grouped around that Supreme and Central Figure in whose glory they are all illuminated, become masters of the art of presenting the most characteristic and vivid likenesses by the fewest strokes. We are in that Jewish house only a few moments, all told. And yet no two acquaintances that we have met, or lived with all our lives, have their images more firmly drawn.

One of these persons is made for practical action. If she is to be a Christian at all, she must be one with her hands and feet. Over those busy hands and willing feet, to be sure, directing them, there must also be an honest, believing mind; and at the root of all these useful activities, lending them cheerfulness and grace, a heart that turns loyally to Christ, true as steel. What you see is the anxious housekeeper, "careful and troubled" about those "many things" proverbially necessary that any house be kept in order. Her concern is that the rooms shall be hospitably ready for that marvellous traveller who always brings health and Heaven where He comes, —the table tidy and furnished for that Divine Guest who blesses the bread with such a benediction as never any Rabbi that came there pronounced, and who makes every house He enters an ante-chamber of the Great House of Peace, where all cares will be at rest. In Martha we have a representative of that large and

honored class of efficient *workers*, women or men, without whom the regularities of life and even the decencies of worship would go to distraction, the blessedness of home would be turned into an irritating vexation, the poor would be unclad and unfed, the charities of the Church would languish, civilization itself lose half its dignity, and the Body of Christ be deformed.

The other figure though in the same family stands in temperament at the opposite extreme. This second soul dwells in a world of silent communion. Religion always has its spring in the heart; and *her* heart-life is chief. Clinging in her attachments, quick to feel, strong rather in the emotional than the practical elements of piety, never so happy as when she can cast herself down under the shadow of that august Presence, and look without speech into that countenance which is tender with the very mercy of God, or listen without a movement to the voice that speaks as man never spake, Mary is the embodiment of Christian sentiment,—using the word not in the derogatory but in the best sense. Christ accepts her and blesses her in that character, as He certainly does not reject or condemn Martha in hers. You will notice that there is no ground whatever in the account for that popular interpretation of it which makes Him unqualifiedly praise the one and rebuke the other. He simply declines to second Martha's censure,—perhaps because He sees some trace of uncharitableness or envy in the accusation. He refuses to blame the loving soul which, however undemonstrative, prefers Him above its chief joy, and which in giving all to Him takes back thereby the one good part which no jealous misconstruction or rivalry can take away.

Out of this marked difference of natural temperaments among the friends of Christ we are warranted in infer-

ring what we may call the gracious comprehensiveness in the spirit and scope of the Gospel. That Gospel, like the charity it puts first among its graces, suits itself "without partiality" to every sort and grade of human constitution. It utterly repudiates the idea that its benefits can be attached exclusively to any one style of man, or any one division of the Race,—a notion that has appeared often enough but has always sprung from the littleness of mortal toleration,—the greediness of some party or the bigotry of some system,—never from the original good news. Not only is the *invitation* to the everlasting spiritual feast broader than any lines of Greek or Jew, bond or free, but the Lord of the feast seems to takes special delight in stamping the royal signet of his acceptance on the most diversified dispositions. The dissimilarity of the two Bethany sisters is only a single instance of this universal adaptation. It seems to me a beautiful evidence of God's love for variety in the flower and fruitage of the human harvests He gathers in around the cross. The same principle of diversity in unity runs through the spiritual and the material kingdoms. He whose Creative Hand has distributed the one vegetable life of the globe into the ninety thousand and more species of plants that botany has classified, delights, it appears, in grafting the holy Life of His Spirit on the stock of every species of humanity under the sun. In the small band of the twelve at the outset you see what unlike materials He chose to mould into the apostles that were together to revolutionize and evangelize the world; —impetuous and ardent Peter; steady and cautious Philip; Andrew, converted in an instant and following Him without delay; and Bartholomew, who was probably Nathanael, approaching with hesitating steps; James the Greater, so vehement in his sonship to the thunder as

to earn the foremost crown of *apostolic* martyrdom, and James the Less, calm and consistent enough to illustrate, as first Bishop of Jerusalem, under the title of James the Just, the even-handed morality which he expounded in his epistles; St. Thomas, the Doubter, constitutionally skeptical, as some men are, requiring the tactual proof of the hand in the Saviour's side and the fingers in the print of the nails, but once convinced making the noblest confession of his faith—"My Lord and my God," and close by his side St. John, believing as easily as the child lays his head on the breast of his mother:—all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit of Christ, dividing to every man severally as He will, diversities of gifts and differences of administration. How can we question that these are meant to be encouraging examples to us of that large faith of Emmanuel which, by its twelvefold embodiment in these twelve different and yet agreeing apostles all growing *from* and *in Christ*, was to plant the world-wide Tree yielding its fruit every month, and which in all ages, and here as much as anywhere, proclaims that Christ died for all, and bids whoever will to come to its living water? Whosoever thou art,—whatever thy name, thy temper, thy temptations, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

Two dangers to our spiritual life attend the denial or even the forgetting of this grand truth. One is the danger of an arrogant and conceited judgment of those whose manner of manifesting their faith varies from our own. What business have you and I, disfigured disciples ourselves at best, only beginners in heavenly knowledge, puny in spiritual stature, grudging in charity, and raw in grace, to play the critic on the moulding of those vessels which the Maker has cast of a turn or color diverse from our own? Here about you He has placed

unlike witnesses of His manifold reconciliation,—one to serve Him by meditative waiting, in solemn stillness of the soul, near His feet, another by enterprising offices of benevolence and deeds of duty done in His name; one by much speech, and another by a silence equally eloquent because the sign of an equally deep and more reserved experience; one by a sagacious judgment, and another by a spontaneous generosity; one by intellect, and another by sensibility; one in a school-house, and another in a hospital; one much in liberty, and another much in form and rule; one moving tranquilly through the routine of a common dwelling, and another majestically taking life in hand and travelling to some corner of the world, bearing a missionary's cross to light up the souls of a few swarthy savages with the promises of pardon:—so has God diversified and animated the whole Body of His people, breaking up what were otherwise the monotony of His household, setting the parts into their several places, demanding *one thing only* as essential—that they all should be knit together in the Living Head, taking their life from Him.

Secondly, the call of Christ is in sympathy with what we are, every one, as our individual constitutions are shaped. A common hindrance to the blessing of a prompt and complete consecration to Christ, especially on the part of the young, is a vague feeling that a life with Him is something restricted to one peculiar line and shape, something so forced, conventional and peculiar that it will be only by some rare chance that it can be attained. "The Master is come, and calleth for thee,"—not that He may make of you a follower just like some other follower, or all unlike yourself, a copy of some particular model, a fac-simile of some memorable saint; but to make of you just such a fresh and self-for-

getful Christian as He intended you to be when He made you what you are. He gave you some traits unlike those of any other person that ever lived in this world. You read the biography of some eminent servant of God with admiration and awe—a missionary perhaps, or an author, or a person of special gifts,—and you lay the book down, saying, "I never can be a believer of that stamp, and it is useless for me to try." You see devout, sweet-tempered, unreproachable "professors of religion" in your neighborhood, and you feel instinctively that, however sincere your desire to be one of the Lord's flock, there is some secret shaping or subtle mixing of the elements of your nature which would make it hopeless to imitate any one of them, and you give it up in despair. You form an artificial ideal, or you hear some hackneyed description of what a signal Christian is expected to be, and you are conscious of a strangeness, apart from any reluctance in your heart or will, which separates you from the possibility of reproducing in your own person just that style of goodness. Now turn from all these disheartening comparisons, and these mortal models, to the one Great Exemplar, and His own message. How striking it is that though you find Him higher, nobler, holier than any of them, there is yet never any thing disheartening or discouraging to any there! His sinlessness is so blended with gentleness, His majesty with His understanding of your wants and sympathy with your struggles, that you feel safe under His hand, and can dare to trust even your sins and follies to His ear. Notice especially the tenderness of Jesus towards the two women's imperfect, half-enlightened faith. Mourning for their brother, they think of this absent Friend who works such wonders on human bodies. Had *He* been present during the days of the

sickness, He would surely have reached out His healing hand, and this dear stay and staff would have been spared to them. How many times they must have said it over to one another in their darkened house,—"Oh, if only the Prophet of Nazareth could have come!" So when each of them meets Him separately, on His arriving, without concert, each in the very same words breaks out with the uppermost thought: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" They believed, *i. e.*, in His power to cure a sick man:—so far their faith had ventured; no further. It was not yet full and free enough to believe that He could raise to life a man four days dead. How does the Saviour treat this timid confidence? Does He scorn it, reject it, and turn the weeping sisters back to a drearier desolation? Never does He treat a sincere and sorrowing inquirer so. Tenderly He takes this feeble germ in His hand, fosters it, blesses it, encourages it. Presently He pours upon it the glorious assurance which has illuminated the graves and comforted the funerals of all the eighteen centuries of affliction since,—"Whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live." It is in the same encouraging gentleness that this Redeemer who is ready to die for us always deals with our honest infirmities. He never breaks the bruised reed or quenches the smoking flax. He is not jealously watching for a pretext to bar up the gate against any that come penitently seeking, whether the Prodigal from the far country and the harlots, or the Magdalen whose frightfully far country of husks and swine is often in the city or close by where we live. He knows that the better life in our breasts is a growing, progressive thing,—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn. Spiritual childhood goes before spiritual maturity. Conversion is the first

step; faith enough to turn the face Christward, to kneel down, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." But Christian training must come and do the rest, never remitting its work of gradual sanctification, till the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ has come. "The Master is come, and calleth *for thee*." If you doubt this, go back again from all the tanglements of human sophistry, and sit down with teachable simplicity like a little child to the simple story of the evangelist. Take the first step first, towards your Best Friend, and the Holy Spirit will show you how to take the next, and the next. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father,—Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins. Lift up your hearts!"

But, chiefly, this call of Christ is personal.

There are many arguments for our Lord's divinity, many persuasions to draw to Him the world's trust. But what if it should all at once come to any of us, a certainty, that there is one Person standing on the earth who not only knows every individual soul through and through, but reads out the whole personal history of our lives from the cradle,—who measures all the good and bad in every man and woman's heart! Nothing less than this penetrating and perfect knowledge of us is the knowledge of the Son of Man. I suspect most of us can understand the conviction that flashed through the frivolous mind of the woman of Samaria when she left her water-pitcher, forgot every thing, and hurried back to Sychar to call her neighbors, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" At first, and while there is no reconciliation and no trust, this awful insight might affright us. We say, "It is terrible to think of;—that before one search-

ing eye all our mixed motives are taken apart, our worst imaginations dragged to light, our meanest passions and most rebellious moods casting their stains against those pure eyes to which the blue heavens are not clean." But the longer we ponder it, and the more earnest we are with ourselves, the more we shall feel that it is a blessed truth. Yes, it is far better so. There is one Friend who understands us: He sticketh closer than a brother: He hath suffered unto blood, striving against *our sins:* it is safe to trust ourselves with Him, sins and all—and when we have believed that, we have gone far towards our salvation.

But what I would gladly help you to feel more vividly even than this is the personal nearness of the Son of Man. Is it not one reason why our religion has so little power over us, and seems to do so little for us, that we keep Christ too far away, regarding His work, His life, His suffering, His cross, and His kingdom as belonging in another world? Suppose your hidden thought should speak out aloud, would you not some time find it saying something like this?—"Yes, Christ may have come into the world to save the great aggregate of mankind; probably He did; the books say so, and I have no ability or desire to dispute them; He may have come to *humanity* as a great abstract something in which I have no share; He came, I suppose, into history, into civilization, He came no doubt to Nazareth and Jerusalem, to Corinthians and Galatians and Colossians; and so it is well to celebrate this religion respectfully for the great good it has done to the development and progress of the race. But, candidly, I have no feeling that Christ has come near to me." So some misguided, wandering souls confess. So much the more do they want this secret Companion who never misreads us, never mocks or misunderstands, never

expects more than we can do, never crushes the germ of any better hope; but only asks you to *believe* that He loves you, and asks that you will touch the hem of His garment by reaching out the hand of your faith. Is it not wonderful that all our varying temperaments alike find their equal and perfect satisfaction in Him? In every thing else we may differ;—one frank and another reserved; one fascinated with society and another secretive; one sensitive to every breath of blame and so shrinking into unuttered suffering,—the next lightly laughing off censure and criticism as birds shake the sleet from their wings,—some seeking wisdom with the Greek, and others requiring a sign or ceremony like the Jews;—but in the one deep need of mediation, forgiveness, and a new spring of spiritual life,—in this we are all together and alike. In Christ alone are we one. Of Him alone can it be said to every single soul, as to every tribe and nation, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." All our humanity is taken up into Him who is the Word made flesh,—God with us. He touches our life at every point. Nothing that we can feel or suffer is out of the range of His sympathy. We have not an high priest that can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. When we foolishly imagine we need Him least, we need Him most. When we go to Him oftenest, and lean upon Him most freely, we find out the meaning of what He said,—that without Him we can do nothing.

I think of only one refuge left open for the fleeing, faithless conscience. Instead of arising quickly and coming to Jesus, the sister of Lazarus might have pleaded unworthiness. At the beginnings of a sincere repentance, when the heart has only life enough to entreat, "Hide Thy face from my sins," and has not gone on to

cry, "Cast me not away from Thy presence," there comes a temptation to despair. The transgression is too bad. God and the soul are too far apart. The crimson-dye is too deep for the Priest's hyssop and blood. How then does the promise read? "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool."

THE LORD'S "MEAT."

Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

"In the meanwhile His disciples prayed Him saying, Master, eat. But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. . . . . My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." —*St. John* iv. 31, 32, 34.

It was a roadside conversation. There was taking place what we call an "accidental" interview. Christ was travelling on foot from Jerusalem, full of Pharisees and hypocrites, to His home among the lake-hills, where were fishermen and shepherds. To Him all people were His Father's children. The capitol and the cottage had one common interest: there were men and women in them to be helped, comforted, and saved. So He did not go round Samaria, which His countrymen hated and avoided.

He comes to the well by the highway. He is weary, thirsty, and hungry, and sits down. And there, in less time than we shall have been in this church to-day, He has told mankind, told you and me, and told all nations to the end of ages, three secrets: first what rest, or peace, is, for every unsatisfied heart on earth; then, who it is that knows every one of these hearts through and through; and then what God is, and how He can be so worshipped that the worshipper will find Him, and be made like Him. I call these *secrets*, because for four thousand years the loftiest and keenest intellects of our Race, east and west, had

been striving and searching to find them out. They asked the stars, and the sea; they asked the libraries and oracles,—they asked nature at midnight and nature in the noonday with her flame of sunlight, Where is peace? Who knows the heart by loving it? How can we find out God?—and the heights and the depths all answered, just as the universities and the museums and rocks and sky answer now: It is not in us to tell you; to us these three "secrets" are "hid"; we can not inform you, O troubled or broken heart; we can not tell you, O remorse, sickness, grave, solitude, weakness, poverty, what will quench the thirst, or wherewith to come before the Most High, and speak with Him as man speaketh with his friend,—we do not know. Satisfaction, salvation, communion with God:—the mystery in each of these is too deep for us. They are secrets. Prophets and kings, Jew and Greek, Solomons and Platos desired to see these things, and did not see them: nor do we.

Suppose the magnificent revelation were at last to be made somewhere: *Where* should we say it would be likely to be?

Would it be in some crowded and curious religious conventicle, heralded, placarded, advertised beforehand, —with thousands of people in eager expectation, and a popular orator on the platform? Would it be in some scientific lecture-hall, or royal institute, or college-chair, with sharp-witted pupils stimulated by some master-brain? So the world would expect; and so it might be, no doubt, if that were the Father's way when He gives His dearest gifts to His children. But where were those three immortal disclosures proclaimed which patient sufferers and penitent sinners were to live by thenceforth, forever? Take notice, every thing in the occasion was commonplace. The Teacher's Cathedral was not superb;

He sat on the stones of a way-side well. The audience was made up of one ordinary woman, with a bucket in her hand,—a woman that helped herself, as narrow in her provincial prejudices as her neighbors were, illiterate, except in the paltry traditions of sectarian hate, and not respectable. Christ, then, did not call nor did He wait for a large congregation; none was ever smaller. Men of the world that day were about their business, working by thousands. Splendid figures were moving; fortunes were building and wasting; ships were sailing, hammers were beating; farmers were saying, "There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest." Rome was ruling and riding in chariots; Athens was carving and painting and making orations; Jerusalem was garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous and devouring widows' houses, living on the piety of dead prophets, and killing those that were alive. In one still spot, by Jacob's well, two people were talking together, first of the dripping water, —then of the burning soul,—and then of the living stream of everlasting love,—and, presently, of the alarms of a startled conscience; and, before they have done, of how sinning men and sinning women and seraphs in Heaven must all alike seek the Father if they would find Him. Who of you here wants inward peace; —who is there of us that does *not?* "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Do you imagine the *dark* spot in your life, the concealed bad habit, the guilty intention, the calculated selfishness hidden perhaps under an insincere religious profession, is covered up? "Go call thy husband and come hither." Your wrong must be set right, or there will be no sweet taste and no eternal life for you even in living water.

Is there a lingering question in your mind whether an outward decency, a pew in church, a religious fashion, a penance, or party-zeal, a subscription, a ceremony, will not pass for piety? "God is a Spirit;" no substitutes, no proxies, no plausible tongue, will bring you near to Him; "they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." Or, does the woman's procrastinating excuse come in?—"I know that Messias cometh, by and by; let things go on as they are for the present; it will be time enough to acknowledge Him, and stand out for Him, when I *must*, or when my neighbors do; I will wait till He comes." "Jesus saith unto her," and He says to you, "I that speak unto thee am He. I am here *with* you, and speak to you, to-day; you are dealing with Me all the time, sitting there hearing the sermon, thinking of other people's sins, glad there are others here by you to screen your soul." It is *you personally* that Christ calls, and tells you He reads all your life through and through, as searchingly as if you were alone with Him, like the woman: it is you He rebukes, you He loves, you He teaches to pray, you He longs to save. This was the Gospel at Samaria and it is the Gospel here. You are not too good to repent, you are not too bad to be forgiven. You thirst, or you will. If you fancy you can cool the fever yourself,—you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Christ is the common people's Saviour. The Church is every body's home. It is holier than Jerusalem, higher than Gerizim, larger than Judea and Samaria and Galilee together. Get out of that selfish, little, laggard life. Come up and live in liberty and light and righteousness, with the Son of Man.

It was while He was still engaged with exalted thoughts like these that His disciples, returning from the town with their basket of provisions, broke in on

their Lord's retirement. They said, "Master, eat." A kind, amiable, dutiful invitation:—the natural thing to say for men on their natural level. But they were living in one world and their Lord in another,—just as He said once, "The Son of Man," here amongst you, "is in Heaven." "I am there; you are on earth and earthly; only a step between our bodies, but a space wider than the orbits of the planets between our minds." I suppose this was the real crucifixion of Jesus, worse than any tearing of His flesh. There were repeated instances in His ministry when, at the moment He needed sympathy most, those around Him went on chattering about their sordid trifles and superficial comforts, utterly misunderstanding both His language and His life. This was His unutterable solitude, so sorrowful and so sublime. None but the Father knew Him. He must live and die alone, longing to draw all men unto Him. Here and there one of us drinks of this cup, and tastes its bitterness. Two human forms live side by side; but the spheres they belong to are apart. And if these suddenly clash against each other, there is pain. They clashed against each other here. The well-meaning disciples said, "Master, eat."

Christ's patience always triumphed. There was no reproach, no complaint. He simply announces, first, the fact "I have meat to eat that *ye know not of*." "There are two kinds of sustenance. I am fed, but not on your food." The disciples are perplexed. Will they comprehend Him any better if He tells them what He means? Tell them He must, at any rate: for to that end came He into the world. "*My* meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

One *possible* sense of the words He certainly does *not* mean. He does not mean that He has not in Him nat-

ural human wants, a sensitive physical frame, mortal weakness exactly like ourselves. Perhaps, with our modern habits of thought, we are not likely to misapprehend Him in that way. It requires a little effort for us in the nineteenth century to realize that there was once a large sect which held that, though the appearances and events of Christ's ministry took place just as they are set down in the New Testament, yet that He had after all no actual, substantial, human body, like our own. He was a spirit, they said, but had a miraculous faculty of making that look like a bodily structure: which was only a phantasm, not real. Christ Himself would do nothing to encourage that dismal heresy. He contradicted it. He tooks pains to call Himself the "Son of Man." He lived exactly as men lived. In this very chapter we see that He "thirsted." He said, "Handle Me; a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." After His resurrection, to show that His body was real, He ate the piece of broiled fish and the honeycomb, put Thomas's fingers into the nail-prints in His hands. St. John had the error in mind when he wrote, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come *in the flesh* is not of God." That spirit is anti-Christ's. And therefore when He tells the disciples He has meat to eat which they know nothing of, He is not pretending to be above physical wants, or to condemn natural appetites, or to despise those who are obliged to spend much of their time in feeding themselves and their families. Honest hunger is no more disgraceful than honest riches. Honest work of the hands, in raising the grain that makes the bread, is just as good service as reading the classics or practising law. He knew that some of the most beneficent and beautiful impulses of social kindness are associated, in the highest estate of

civilization, with eating and drinking at a common table. More than that, He made eating and drinking to be sacramental signs of the loftiest act of devotion,—the holy communion of faith between the Christian and His Redeemer. His doctrine is that all these material things can be made not only innocent but sacred. Christianity is not the killing out, or the dwarfing down, or the mutilating, of any faculty; it is to use every thing purely, unselfishly, temperately, and faithfully. Each good gift of earth and sky is to be received with thanksgiving. Whether ye eat or drink, labor or play, *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.* These common things take on through Him a sacramental character. Divine with God, Christ is human with man. He lies a child in His mother's lap, He grows, sleeps, is lonely, is tired; His tears are human tears; when His veins are cut human blood runs out, —the "one blood" of all the nations of the one human Race. A theology which obscured or forgot this would be a fatally defective and powerless thing. The King is our Brother. The Redeemer is Mary's child. The "Son of Man" must be *one* with us before He can make us one with the Father.

We come nearer, therefore, to the real meaning. While Christ would not drive apart those things which God hath joined together, the hungering body and the immaterial soul—yet His great mission into the world is to bring the two into their right relation and order:—He does that by setting the one *over* the other, as its superior and its Master. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." You bid Me refresh Myself out of your earthly basket,—with perishable provisions: but here, in spiritual converse with this alien woman, whom you despise, I have been feeding, both in Myself and her, a higher kind of life. We have been speaking together

of sin and salvation from it, of righteousness, of God, of eternity. We have been thinking how all nations have one Father, and all men are brothers. No teachers on earth, however sharp or eloquent, have ever found these things out. They are glorious thoughts;—they are magnificent realities. By their side, this mountain dwindles; Jacob's well is shallow; the old Rabbi's learning is rubbish; in comparison, your good things are of small account, though they should be feasts or crowns; the sublime sky itself is dull. These truths belong to that part of us which never dies. Eating and drinking are well enough in their time and place. But when a man's heart rises to these ennobling prospects, it is a small matter whether he eats or not. Drinking of this water, you will never thirst again. I come to tell you that there is something better and richer and sweeter for us all than a full mouth and relishing palate,—than money, or furniture, or investments,—than loaded tables or fine houses. Man shall not live by bread only; but by every word out of the mouth of God. Love and faith and hope, honor and purity and patience, forgiveness of sin, and likeness to God, and a tender conscience, and a clean breast,—these are what we live for, and they are all that make life worth living at all. Better die at once than live without them. The body might starve to death, these things would not be altered; the man, the soul, would live on still. The spirit is not made for the flesh, but the flesh for the spirit. Keep the inferior nature under. Be something better than a well-dressed animal, when you might be a son or a daughter of the Lord Almighty. Be more than a scholar, or a capitalist, or a master-workman, or a leader in society, seeing that you are called to be a saint. Do every thing nobly, religiously,—*i. e.*, in the name and spirit of your Lord. Come

up to this higher plane. It is the most substantial of all sorts of welfare, as well as the grandest of all triumphs. And it is perfectly practicable. Join your life to the life of Christ, and you will rise easily with Him to this heavenly superiority over the world. Here is the secret, opened by the Son of God:—"Meat to eat" which, till we come to Him, we know nothing of.

But why should this service, noble as it is, be called "meat"? Meat is put for all kinds of food. Food does two things. It satisfies an uneasy desire; and it nourishes and strengthens the constitution that receives it. Right living, living for God and for all the glorious realities of His spiritual kingdom, living in a constant feeling of friendship with Him *satisfies a desire*, which is a kind of hunger in the soul. You may say many people know nothing about any such hunger; if they did they would give up their selfish or sensual way, and turn to God, and be satisfied. But there are answers to that. One is that although many grown-up persons are, after a while, so hardened by selfish indulgence and sensual habit that they have lost the lively sense of a longing for a purer life, still they had it once. It is true, also, that the desire for a better life is naturally stronger in some hearts than others, according as their nature is fine or coarse. And then do we not all know that we often want something, and want it very deeply, and are even miserable without it, when we are ignorant how to get relief? It is so when the body is out of health and we go to the physician. Very often the blind conscience needs an interpreter; the restless heart needs to be shown the secret of its glorious discontent. Christ comes into the world for that. You find Him always telling men they are not satisfied; they are not full; they have aspirations above their condition; they hunger and they

"finished" work, because, to the last stroke spent, and the last breath drawn, Christ gives it power and grace. No matter how long life is, or how short, if it is faithful. No matter where death is, if within us is the *life* of Him who liveth evermore. You can not break that life off *any where* so that it will look to God like a broken thing. You can not beat it down, so that it will be a beaten, defeated, mean, or conquered creature. It will be "finished." It triumphs. It rejoices. It hungers no more, neither thirsts any more. This little life we live now is running down, feed it and clothe it as we will. Its brain, its heart, its nerves, are wearing out. It fades as the leaf fades. Live with Christ and you can never die. Follow Christ, and you will never be without a Friend. Speak to Him in prayer, and while you are speaking He will answer, and He will say—"Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me: that ye may eat and drink at My table, in My kingdom."

GOD'S REMAINDER.

Twenty-Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

"God hath not cast away His people. . . . Elijah said, . . . Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal."—*Romans* xi. 2, 3, 4.

We are living in a time when the reigning influence of society tempts many people, and drives others, away from integrity and purity:—a time when public examples of dishonesty and sensuality take sides with the worst passions of our nature, and when men that had been trusted in business and venerated in the church give way, and go down. There are dangers in such a time that touch the conscience and try the faith of us all. What we are to remember is that God is not changed; that there are good and true men left, whom we can depend upon, and ought to honor; men beyond seduction or disgrace; and that personal character, rooted in Christian principle, which is practicable everywhere, is and always will be the strength and glory of the world. "What saith the answer of God? God hath not cast away His people. I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal."

The "image" was the real idol: the original of it, Baal, was a phantom, probably the imagined ghost of

thirst,—and they try to feed their hunger on that which is not bread or to slake the thirst with something which is not water: "Whosoever will drink of the water that I shall give him, and eat My bread, shall never thirst, never be hungry again." Ask yourselves, my friends, one by one, whether you have not had, some time or other, this longing. It was the gift of the Spirit. There are traces of a noble parentage about you that you do not see. Vicious, perhaps, you are not wholly at home in vice;—Godless, you are not entirely at ease without God. You were made for righteousness, temperance, prayer. The woman at the well was, bad as her life had been, and you are. The moment you turn and begin this better life, you have meat to eat that you knew not of before;—the great secret opens, and you feast with your Master.

Nor is this all. Besides the craving filled, and along with the relish, there is actual nourishment. At first it seems as if Christian service were all *giving* and *spending*, —for others or for God. But as you go on in it, another secret is found out. You take more than you give. A good man finds his life continually strengthened by the very act of living it. The woman's bucket at the well, to be sure, was filled by pouring in, not by pouring out. But her spirit, and the spirit of every disciple, grows by sacrifice. No reaction in mechanics is so sure. St. Paul gathered power from every missionary journey. St. Peter was firmer for every penitential tear he shed. Bishop Pattison among the Australian savages, in his poverty and drudgery, was rising in the stature of a hero and saint till the day they shot him down, not knowing what they did. All we give away for the Church, for missions, for charity, enriches us. Anger subdued, appetite controlled, a kind answer to revilers, cheerful praise in the

day of adversity,—these are the "meat,"—better than any market sells or meadow yields,—"which strengtheneth man's heart."

Christ opens one splendid secret more. He says this holy life,—the life of love, of duty, and of self-denial,—is the carrying out of God's plan. "My meat is to do the will *of Him that sent Me.*" It is not a life that lives itself, or runs along without effort on a level of mortal motives, or easy maxims. Prudence, education, self-reliance, a scientific sagacity in minding the laws of nature, never produced it. It comes down from a Person in Heaven, and looks up, and mounts up, to Him again. It speaks its petitions to a personal Father; it leans on a personal arm; it is comforted by a personal sympathy, —the Living God. Pantheism never comforted a sorrow, or heard a prayer, or sang an anthem, or forgave a sin, or wrote a Bible, or made it easy to suffer, or gave any meaning to a flower on a mother's grave. It never made an apostle John, or trained a Deaconess, or built an orphan house, or a hospital, or glorified a cross. We hear a great deal about "ideas," and "principles," and "discoveries," and general rules of good behavior. They are well enough; but if we try to feed our life on abstractions it will be a dry diet, and the heart will hunger on. In the fire of temptation, and in the front-peril of any real battle, we shall want the Living Leader, the Living Witness, and the Living Judge. To do another's will, —not our own at its best,—to do God's Will,—is the meat that invigorates and satisfies your soul.

One final thought. Our Lord says—"To do the will of Him that sent Me and to *finish* His work." There rises before every one of us, even the weakest or the worst of us—the vision of a perfect life. "Perfect," because lived out to the very end in the spirit of an obedient faith,—

seek my life to take it away." But now there comes a magnificent revelation, out of the mouth of God. It is a truth that every soul must find out and feel that would be faithful. What is it? It is that true greatness does not stand in great results that can be seen. Success does not lie in numbers counted. Power is stored up in hidden places, and in lonely consciences. Duty is not discharged in undertaking things out of our reach, or in longing for what is unattainable, or in having our life arranged in our own way. That is what our Lord meant, when He spoke of certain persons as having revealed to them what is "*hid* from the wise and prudent" over-knowing people, who count the audience, and take show for substance. The Lord said, "Go on thy way, Elijah, to the wilderness." Take duties as they come, one at a time. Have done with measuring God's power by your geometry, or estimating His army by arithmetic. Stop reckoning up His friends, or His enemies. Leave off speculating on the great courses and destinies of empires or religions. Rouse from the torpid reaction which follows emotional excitement. Your extravagant expectation of a general jubilee, when you conquered some difficulty, was not much better than the despondency of to-day. Go on your way to a "wilderness," if your Lord's road runs to a wilderness. It is of less account where it runs, than what manner of man you are, and whether God goes with you. Act instantly for Him; live one hour at a time; live in immediate obedience to Christ.

Some years ago an acute German translated the Old Testament doctrine into a few short words, as the maxim of a new philosophy; probably he forgot where he found it; but it sounded out into modern literature as an original oracle. "Do the duty that lies nearest thee." That scatters doubt; it overcomes opposition; it breaks up

despair. The Almighty takes care of His reserves. "I have left Me seven thousand men in Israel, all knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." It was a great answer, and it is no wonder that St. Paul, when he needed it, recalled it.

I think, my friends, we need it now. We certainly need the knees that have not bowed to Baal: and when it seems as if almost everybody we know had knelt there, we want the inspiration of this better faith.

Has Baal vanished? Was he only an apparition of oriental fanatics? It seems to me not. In one sense, he was a fiction then, and in the same sense he is a fiction now. But as the world struggles slowly up, age after age, out of darkness into Christian light, it often happens that religious imaginations and fables—shadows as they are, are yet shadows of very solid realities. It is certain that in those old times, and in these modern times of ours, there is a tremendous power not only attacking Christianity from without but corrupting it within, acting against God, against the righteousness of God, against chastity and honor and faith and prayer, but acting through human tongues and hands. We shall make a terrible mistake, if we think to take away one jot or tittle of the horror or peril of that fact by saying that we *know* more than the old Phœnicians did, because we have common schools and newspapers. On the contrary, what do you understand to be foremost among the objects of this people in this country, in their business life and social life?—Is duty first? Is Christian character first? Is a universal reign or law of righteousness? If it is, then the supreme object that business-men are thinking of when they *lay out* their business and follow it every day is to help and bless other men: it is to get

some Arabic robber whose hands while he was alive were full of blood and gold.

Inscriptions have been found lately in the East showing that this foul fiction, in regions lying southward and southwest of Palestine, was adored by multitudes of men. In some of the worst days of Israel that infamous worship crept across the borders, set up its altars on the Holy Land, and sent its polluting poison into the blood of the best nation on earth,—God's own people. "Israel" was the Church.

St. Paul, always apt to pour light about the Faith of the new kingdom from the history of the old, goes back to that dark spot in the past. He is making it plain that no matter how many fall away from the Faith, the Faith itself lives on. The human part in religion is one thing; the divine is another, and the divine part never dies. Bad as the times may be, they are never bad enough to corrupt the immortal grace that lies hidden in the heart of the Church. Worldliness may make frightful encroachments on the spirituality of Christ's disciples; but it always stops short of an absolute extermination. You may let Mammon crowd its policy into a parish, or flout its fashions within the walls of the sanctuary, yet there will be a Holy Place still, an ark of the Tabernacle, with incense, manna and a budding rod, sacred treasures of sacrament and ministry stored up in it, which no desecrations can reach. God does not cast away *His people.*

The apostle recalls the old prophet, Elijah, and makes a strong case. Matters in Church and State had come to the worst. Political and ecclesiastical parties had rent the one commonwealth asunder.

Two tottering thrones, on soil soaked with family blood, frowned at one another in anger, but upheld

no just law, and protected no personal rights. Over one of the fragments of the schism ruled a tyrant—Ahab—consistent in nothing but cruelty, and persevering in nothing but appetite, with a Queen—Jezebel—who made royalty contemptible and womanhood shameful, daughter, wife and mother of kings, but voluptuous without tenderness and crowned without honor. Ahab and Jezebel are names of vices almost as much as of persons, and have been for nearly three thousand years.

Their frenzied priests and outlandish prophets have driven the service of Jehovah into caverns of the hills. After his one miraculous victory over these necromancers at Mt. Carmel, Elijah, hunted by Jezebel, has fled for his life. Under a juniper-tree, discouraged, exiled, solitary, his physical frame worn down, his spirits sunk, he prays that he may die. "O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." Many of us, I think, can understand it. He had hoped to reform God's Kingdom and restore public order, where other men had failed. The splendid dream is broken, and life is flat. So *we* try great things; we fail; and look smaller to ourselves than ever. It is the same universal humanity that cried at last in our Elder Brother from Heaven, deserted so utterly of men that it seemed a moment like the hiding of the Face of God, "My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" An angel touches Elijah and sets him for a while on his feet. Farther on, at the mouth of a cave in Horeb, when wind and earthquake and fire have taught him that God works more mightily in stillness than in noise, his despair comes back. The voice said again, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" He said, "The children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left; and they

means to build and enlarge this practical government of Jesus Christ, to get duty done, by all classes, to create Christian goodness on every side. And when one of these men *fails* in business, his first regret will be that his ability to extend the Kingdom of God has failed. This will be the keenest pang,—as it was Elijah's heart-breaking disappointment. So of social life and manners. If Baal is clean gone, then our young people enter society, with a definite purpose of carrying there the invigorating influence, the comforting sympathies, the goodness of Christ:—which after all makes the difference between a civilized heathenism and a Christian civilization. Are those great human currents of attraction in conversation, festivity, amusement, which draw people together, controlled by a distinct principle to make the company better, and the community purer? *Is* there then a modern Baal, or not? Take that spirit which is ascendant in both the work and the play of our thriftier populations. How much of it might all go on just as well if they had no belief at all in God, or the Bible, or a future life! You all know that to the baptized people who move in and out every Sunday at the churches, there is an ever-present, eager, pressing temptation which endangers your salvation. It is the temptation to forget God in daily care. Be honest, then, and confess that this is the enemy of the soul, of your soul, with all that is noble and beautiful belonging to it. Whatever the "man of sin" may be at a future crisis, this is the anti-christ of this day, of this people. If Christ at His Advent finds nothing in you, so that you can not live His life, it will be because this other spirit has *possession* of you. That is the very word of the Gospel. It *possesses* you; you are in its power. Duty, character, holiness of heart, are not of it, but alien to it, and chill it when they appear. They are not

what it wants. If worldliness comes to church, it comes to show its jewels and compromise with the commandments. Virtually, it sets up other altars. Virtually, it has a false God, lying because it makes promises that are never kept, cruel because it kills the better life, impious because it defeats the glorious end for which God put His image in every man. If it is intellectual it cultivates the intellect on its selfish and sensuous side. It has the patronage of kings and queens of the social world,—Ahab, perhaps without his vulgarity,—Jezebel without her savage indecency. The divinity has a female companion, Ashtaroth: and woman, bereft of her power to ennoble and sanctify man, and keeping only the skill to please him, is the chief minister to social madness and ruin,—the priestess of that sorcery. Baal built his altars on high places; and materialism is most dangerous when it goes up into the realm of art and beauty and scholarship with its degrading decorations, walking no nearer to Christ for all its æsthetic aspiration,—if there is no self-denial, no sacrifice, no charity kindled by His cross.

We have then, reproduced, the disheartening contradiction between a sacred heritage from Heaven on the one hand and an impious secularism on the other. Does not the same effect follow?—weaker faith, less confidence in our cause, slackened exertion, and even a mistaken notion of what the Gospel was sent into the world to do? We have to hear it charged upon the Gospel that it fails to bring its converts up to its standard: upon the Church that it is a market for money and goes giddy with the lust of the eyes and the pride of life; upon its officers that they make concessions of the principles of God's House to fill its seats or ease its finances, and that they "run" a Christian parish as they would an insurance company or a mill. What retributions wait on these

mercenary treacheries it is not my object now to point out. The point is that we misconceive the whole spiritual plan if we imagine that its *power* is to be judged by its outward achievements. Granted that the world is as worldly, unbelief as prevalent, inconsistency as widespread, the Church as timid and supple as prophets fear or skeptics declare? "What saith the answer of God,"—to the prophet and the skeptic both? "I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." God has a wonderful way of making much out of a little, saving the battle by a handful of heroes, calling up his reserves out of obscurity, and never quite letting His altar fires go out. It is not known just how many souls there were at that moment in Israel: the country was populous. Seven thousand would be a slight proportion. More than that, they were out of sight, scattered saints, crouching in corners, driven up into the recesses of mountains. Nobody took count of them.

Elijah was looking at the kingdom on its mortal side:—and so when its prophets were slain and its altars digged down he fancied all was lost. Not so sees the All-seeing. He braces up the prophet's courage by telling him of the remnant of life left, kept in obscure men and women, an unreckoned hope. There was always a light shining in a dark place, a witness left behind by floods of ungodliness and ravages of persecution;—in the early age the candlestick of little Philadelphia up among the hills; a church in the wilderness; a church in the catacombs; a church under the altar; believers huddled together like sheep hearing the cry of wolves, in Switzerland, in Scotland, in England, north and south, east and west. The gates of hell never prevail. Some souls walk through the furnace with no smell of fire on their garments.

There is faith in the hovel when there is profligacy in the palace; there are prayer and charity in the kitchen when there are luxury and doubt and scoffing in library and parlor. The Almighty takes care of His own, and knows where they are, and sees to what throne their knees bend. We need not apprehend with the least fear that there will ever be a time, however aggressive, crafty, and apparently successful materialism may be, when witnesses to Christ will not make good His pledge, that the rock His Church rests on is eternal, and that He will not suffer His truth, any more than His life, to fail.

Now, then, between these two facts,—on the one side the inroads of a subtle and popular worldly-mindedness, weakening the Church deplorably in its conscience and its heart, and, on the other, the certainty of an immortal survival of her secret life hid in Christ, with a power of personal piety none the less imperishable because it is in a minority, and none the less sure to triumph because it "cometh not with observation,"—I set before you a law for our conduct,—needed, I think, for practical use, in the days we are living in: *What God is requiring of us is personal fidelity, or the earnest training of private Christian character, in each one by himself, irrespective of any visible results, or any possible discouragements.*

For this there are the clearest grounds. First it follows straight on in the way of the beginnings of the Church under the hand of our Lord. Along the banks of the Jordan Jesus spoke to persons. He roused, by personal power, in each one, a new love for Himself, a new thirst after righteousness. The Church so far was in Him. Afterwards, out of His Divine Person, came the Church of mankind,—with all its graces, forms and ministries. But the first demand was a

Christian character to put there. Get one holy man, hungering to do right, and brave enough to do it against any maxims of the majority; one holy woman, unspotted from the world, and brave enough to lift up men and fashions into her own high pathway of light, and you are working precisely in the line of Him who knows all that is in man, and redeems the Race. Make yourself that man, or that woman, and you make the best possible contribution that can ever be made to the saving of society and the world. "Go on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus,"—God's own way. It may be lonely, perhaps, at present, but it leads, by the way of the wilderness, to "the multitude that no man can number."

The doctrine is strong, secondly, in this, that it is practicable. Every individual has one realm that is absolutely his own—his conscience. Disappointed, baffled, thwarted, outwitted everywhere else, even in undertaking to do good, you can come back to that. The word of the voice was, "*Return* by the way of the wilderness," —solitary, but free—in that "glorious liberty" of a son or daughter of God. You can make that private realm all Christian, all clean, if you will, for the Spirit's help is yours beforehand. So much territory, one spot, so much of the spiritual landscape that makes up the scenery of Christendom, you create. The next field to yours may have been seized by Baal and Ashtaroth. Some altar of theirs may be set up in spite of you under your own roof. It may be the sorrow and agony of your life to know that it is there. Pagan pleasures may allure your children. The city may wear a Canaanitish expression. Men in high places, men that you would like to respect as being higher than their places, may sit at Jezebel's table. You may not know whether six thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine others are true to

God with you or not. They too may be in forlorn places. But your own castle is in the "munition of rocks." And with you there, always, is the Master, sitting down to meat with you, lifting for you the burden that is too heavy to lift alone, helping your infirmities, making the place sufficient, and its darkest corners luminous, with His countenance.

The sphere of this personal Christian character touches others, wonderfully, but never depends upon them, so as to surrender if they go over to Baal. Your knees are your own, to bend which way you will. But none the less are we all to remember how many ways there are, if we seek them out, of strengthening other witnesses,—in the house, in the neighborhood, in the parish. The Apostles called no convention. Great reforms are in single souls before they are in parliaments, synods, or constitutions. They may be by any roadside. Take one instance from history. In a street in Paris, one day early in the seventeenth century, when Paris was as bad as it ever was, an obscure woman, a widow, her secret soul so fired by prayer and charity that she could be silent no longer, meeting some fashionable young clergymen approached them and said modestly, "I have seen your life; many an hour I have prayed to God to convert your hearts; some day I hope He will hear me." Those gentle words rolled in upon the conscience of one of the gay ecclesiastics like a peal of thunder. Olier's father was conspicuous in politics; his mother was intensely ambitious, vain, cruel, like Jezebel; he had himself passed a brilliant youth where even the priesthood knelt oftener to Baal than to Christ. Stepping from his liveried equipage into famous Parisian pulpits, he had come down flattered by society for fashionable sermons, "bristling with eloquent conceits," having nothing in them to offend intoxicated, licentious France.

The poor widow's pleading whisper rang in his heart. He bent his knees for the first time with an honest face to God, and prayed for himself. One luxury after another he renounced, and became very poor for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. A voice cried in his ears, wherever he went, "O Paris, Paris, you and your trifling make profligates of men who might convert more worlds than one!" And out of that Paris, straightway, men, hearing the voice, came. After long and purifying discipline, Olier, with a band of them about him, in a wide horrible district of the capital,—acres of depravity and poverty and violence called the sink of Paris,—began the missions of St. Sulpice. He was as poor as the poorest, gentle to the vilest, and fearless before savages, like Elijah. Three things he set before him, and those three things, in a short life, he accomplished,—the sanctification of the clergy, the instruction of the people, the holy training of young men for holy orders. Through the "sink" ran presently streams of healing water. The "wilderness," budded and blossomed like the rose. Hidden saints in Europe, "seven thousand," the weak widow Marie Rousseau among them, began to lift up their heads. At the age of thirty-four, the young prophet saw a revival of spirituality on every side of him. Bishops came to thank him as a reformer of their convents, and statesmen to consult him as an organizer of men. The great seminary started in a small house grew up under his hand. He sent missions to North America, where the colonies were then young,—to Montreal, to Baltimore. Freedom from worldliness, fraternal charity, lowliness and readiness for the humblest occupations, high-toned honor, prompt obedience,—these were the characteristics of the Sulpicians everywhere. Branches rose and spread. At the French Revolution there were

thirty-two schools swept away, like other treasures, in that blast of fiery wind. A public decree of 1816 restored them. All this because one lonely woman spoke for God, and one proud favorite of fashion refused to bow his knees, save to God, any more.

So God's harvests spring, and so they grow, the world over. This is not a miracle, but a law. Time does not undo the promise, or repeal the law, or tire out the love of Christ. If the idols and the altars of Baal are not far away, neither are Elijah, and St. Paul, and He whom the prophet saw transfigured on the mount. I see the perilous inconsistency and languor inside the Church; but I see the patient power of the Lord, reserving His remnant of faithful hearts, and remembering His promise; and I see the glorious work waiting to be done in the midst of us, first by single and then by united hands. Have you seen it? Are you doing your part of it? Character, steadfast, pure, holy, is at once its force and its fruit. Can you let life run to its end, and have no share in its blessing?

THE END.